The Lady
of the Lake
The gallant horse exhausted fell
But shuddering in the ringed dell
Over dashing down a darksome dell
Seem lost to hound & hunter & kennel

2023

E. W. Pearce
Bombay 1863.

THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

The Lady of the Lake.

Sir W. Scott, Bart.

SCOTT'S TOMB AT DRYBURGH

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The Lady of the Lake.

Canto First.—The Chase.

HARP of the North ! that mouldering long haſt hung
On the wych-elm that ſhades St. Fillan's ſpring,
And down the fitful breeze thy numbers flung,
Till envious ivy did around thee cling,
Muffling with verdant ringlet every ſtring—
Oh Minſtrel Harp ! ſtill muſt thine accents ſleep ?
Mid ruſtling leaves and fountains murmuring,

Still muſt thy ſweeter ſounds their ſilence keep,
Nor bid a warrior ſmile, nor teach a maid to weep ?

Not thus, in ancient days of Caledon,
  Was thy voice mute amid the feſtal crowd,
When lay of hopeleſs love, or glory won,
  Arouſed the fearful, or ſubdued the proud.
  At each according pauſe, was heard aloud
Thine ardent ſymphony ſublime and high !
  Fair dames and creſted chiefs attention bow'd ;
For ſtill the burthen of thy minſtrelſy
Was Knighthood's dauntleſs deed, and Beauty's matchleſs eye.

Oh wake once more ! how rude ſoe'er the hand
  That ventures o'er thy magic maze to ſtray ;
Oh wake once more ! though ſcarce my ſkill command
  Some feeble echoing of thine earlier lay :
  Though harſh and faint, and ſoon to die away,
And all unworthy of thy nobler ſtrain,
  Yet if one heart throb higher at its ſway,
The wizard note has not been touched in vain.
Then ſilent be no more ! Enchantreſs, wake again !

I.

The ſtag at eve had drunk his fill,
Where danced the moon on Monan's rill,

And deep his midnight lair had made
In lone Glenartney's hazel ſhade ;
But, when the ſun his beacon red,
Had kindled on Benvoirlich's head,
The deep-mouthed bloodhound's heavy bay
Reſounded up the rocky way,
And faint, from farther diſtance borne,
Were heard the clanging hoof and horn.

II.

As chief who hears his warder call,
"To arms ! the foemen ſtorm the wall !"
The antler'd monarch of the waſte
Sprang from his heathery couch in haſte.
But, ere his fleet career he took,
The dew-drops from his flanks he ſhook ;
Like creſted leader proud and high,
Toſſed his beamed frontlet to the ſky ;
A moment gazed adown the dale,
A moment ſnuffed the tainted gale,
A moment liſtened to the cry,
That thickened as the chaſe drew nigh ;
Then, as the headmoſt foes appeared,
With one brave bound the copſe he cleared,
And, ſtretching forward free and far,
Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.

III.

Yelled on the view the opening pack—
Rock, glen, and cavern paid them back ;
To many a mingled ſound at once
The awakened mountain gave reſponſe.
An hundred dogs bayed deep and ſtrong,
Clattered an hundred ſteeds along,
Their peal the merry horns rang out,
An hundred voices joined the ſhout ;
With hark, and whoop, and wild halloo,
No reſt Benvoirlich's echoes knew.
Far from the tumult fled the roe,
Cloſe in her covert cowered the doe,
The falcon, from her cairn on high,
Caſt on the rout a wondering eye,
Till far beyond her piercing ken
The hurricane had ſwept the glen.
Faint, and more faint, its failing din
Returned from cavern, cliff, and linn,
And ſilence ſettled, wide and ſtill,
On the lone wood and mighty hill.

IV.

Leſs loud the ſounds of ſylvan war
Diſturbed the heights of Uam-Var,

And rouſed the cavern where 'tis told
A giant made his den of old ;
For ere that ſteep aſcent was won,
High in his pathway hung the ſun,
And many a gallant, ſtayed per force,
Was fain to breathe his faltering horſe ;
And of the trackers of the deer
Scarce half the leſſening pack was near ;
So ſhrewdly, on the mountain ſide,
Had the bold burſt their mettle tried.

V.

The noble Stag was pauſing now
Upon the mountain's ſouthern brow,
Where broad extended far beneath,
The varied realms of fair Menteith.
With anxious eye he wander'd o'er
Mountain and meadow, moſs and moor,
And pondered refuge from his toil,
By far Lochard or Aberfoyle.
But nearer was the copſewood grey
That waved and wept on Loch-Achray,
And mingled with the pine-trees blue
On the bold cliffs of Ben-venue.
Freſh vigour with the hope returned—
With flying foot the heath he ſpurned,

Held weſtward with unwearied race,
And left behind the panting chaſe.

VI.

'Twere long to tell what ſteeds gave o'er,
As ſwept the hunt through Cambus-more ;
What reins were tightened in deſpair,
When roſe Benledi's ridge in air ;
Who flagged upon Bochaſtle's heath,
Who ſhunned to ſtem the flooded Teith—
For twice, that day, from ſhore to ſhore,
The gallant Stag ſwam ſtoutly o'er.
Few were the ſtragglers, following far,
That reached the lake of Vennachar ;
And when the Brig of Turk was won,
The headmoſt horſeman rode alone.

VII.

Alone, but with unbated zeal,
That horſeman plied the ſcourge and ſteel ;
For, jaded now, and ſpent with toil,
Emboſſed with foam, and dark with ſoil,
While every gaſp with ſobs he drew,
The labouring Stag ſtrained full in view.
Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's breed,
Unmatched for courage, breath, and ſpeed,

BRIG OF TURK.

p. 6.

Faſt on his flying traces came,
And all but won that deſperate game;
For, ſcarce a ſpear's length from his haunch,
Vindictive toiled the bloodhounds ſtaunch;
Nor nearer might the dogs attain,
Nor farther might the quarry ſtrain.
Thus up the margin of the lake,
Between the precipice and brake,
O'er ſtock and rock their race they take.

VIII.

The hunter marked that mountain high,
The lone lake's weſtern boundary,
And deemed the Stag muſt turn to bay,
Where that huge rampart barred the way;
Already glorying in the prize,
Meaſured his antlers with his eyes;
For the death-wound, and death-halloo,
Muſtered his breath, his whinyard drew;
But, thundering as he came prepared,
With ready arm and weapon bared,
The wily quarry ſhunned the ſhock,
And turned him from the oppoſing rock;
Then, daſhing down a darkſome glen,
Soon loſt to hound and hunter's ken,

In the deep Trofachs' wildeſt nook
His ſolitary refuge took.
There while, cloſe couched, the thicket ſhed
Cold dews and wild-flowers on his head,
He heard the baffled dogs in vain
Rave through the hollow paſs amain,
Chiding the rocks that yelled again.

IX.

Cloſe on the hounds the hunter came,
To cheer them on the vaniſhed game;
But, ſtumbling in the rugged dell,
The gallant horſe exhauſted fell.
The impatient rider ſtrove in vain
To rouſe him with the ſpur and rein,
For the good ſteed, his labours o'er,
Stretched his ſtiff limbs, to riſe no more.
Then, touched with pity and remorſe,
He ſorrowed o'er the expiring horſe:—
"I little thought, when firſt thy rein
I ſlacked upon the banks of Seine,
That highland eagle ere ſhould feed
On thy fleet limbs, my matchleſs ſteed!
Woe worth the chaſe, woe worth the day,
That coſts thy life, my gallant grey!"

X.

Then through the dell his horn refounds,
From vain purſuit to call the hounds.
Back limped, with ſlow and crippled pace,
The ſulky leaders of the chaſe ;
Cloſe to their maſter's ſide they preſſed,
With drooping tail and humbled creſt ;
But ſtill the dingle's hollow throat
Prolonged the ſwelling bugle-note.
The owlets ſtarted from their dream,
The eagles anſwered with their ſcream.
Round and around the ſounds were caſt,
Till echo ſeemed an anſwering blaſt ;
And on the hunter hied his way,
To join ſome comrades of the day ;
Yet often pauſed, ſo ſtrange the road,
So wondrous were the ſcenes it ſhow'd.

XI.

The weſtern waves of ebbing day
Rolled o'er the glen their level way ;
Each purple peak, each flinty ſpire,
Was bathed in floods of living fire.
But not a ſetting beam could glow
Within the dark ravines below,

Where twined the path, in ſhadow hid,
Round many a rocky pyramid.
Shooting abruptly from the dell
Its thunder-ſplintered pinnacle ;
Round many an inſulated maſs,
The native bulwarks of the paſs,
Huge as the tower which builders vain
Preſumptuous piled on Shinar's plain.
Their rocky ſummits, ſplit and rent,
Formed turret, dome, or battlement,
Or ſeemed fantaſtically ſet
With cupola or minaret,
Wild creſts as pagod ever decked,
Or moſque of eaſtern architect.
Nor were theſe earth-born caſtles bare,
Nor lacked they many a banner fair ;
For, from their ſhivered brows diſplayed,
Far o'er the unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dew-drop ſheen,
The briar-roſe fell in ſtreamers green,
And creeping ſhrubs of thouſand dyes
Waved in the weſt-wind's ſummer ſighs.

XII.

Boon nature ſcattered, free and wild,
Each plant or flower, the mountain's child.

Here eglantine embalmed the air,
Hawthorn and hazel mingled there ;
The primroſe pale, and violet flower,
Found in each clift a narrow bower ;
Fox-glove and night-ſhade, ſide by ſide,
Emblems of puniſhment and pride,
Grouped their dark hues with every ſtain
The weather-beaten crags retain ;
With boughs that quaked at every breath,
Grey birch and aſpen wept beneath ;
Aloft, the aſh and warrior oak
Caſt anchor in the rifted rock ;
And higher yet, the pine-tree hung
His ſhattered trunk, and frequent flung,
Where ſeemed the cliffs to meet on high,
His boughs athwart the narrowed ſky.
Higheſt of all, where white peaks glanced,
Where gliſtening ſtreamers waved and danced,
The wanderer's eye could barely view
The ſummer heaven's delicious blue ;
So wondrous wild, the whole might ſeem
The ſcenery of a fairy dream.

XIII.

Onward, amid the copſe 'gan peep
A narrow inlet, ſtill and deep,

Affording ſcarce ſuch breadth of brim
As ſerved the wild-duck's brood to ſwim ;
Loſt for a ſpace, through thickets veering,
But broader when again appearing,
Tall rocks and tufted knolls their face
Could on the dark-blue mirror trace ;
And farther as the hunter ſtray'd,
Still broader ſweep its channels made.
The ſhaggy mounds no longer ſtood,
Emerging from entangled wood,
But, wave-encircled, ſeemed to float,
Like caſtle girdled with its moat ;
Yet broader floods extending ſtill,
Divide them from their parent hill,
Till each, retiring, claims to be
An iſlet in an inland ſea.

XIV.

And now, to iſſue from the glen,
No pathway meets the wanderer's ken,
Unleſs he climb, with footing nice,
A far projecting precipice.
The broom's tough roots his ladder made,
The hazel ſaplings lent their aid ;
And thus an airy point he won,
Where, gleaming with the ſetting ſun,

One burniſh'd ſheet of living gold,
Loch-Katrine lay beneath him rolled ;
In all her length far winding lay,
With promontory, creek, and bay,
And iſlands that, empurpled bright,
Floated amid the livelier light ;
And mountains, that like giants ſtand,
To ſentinel enchanted land.
High on the ſouth, huge Ben-venue
Down to the lake in maſſes threw
Crags, knolls, and mounds, confuſedly hurled,
The fragments of an earlier world ;
A wildering foreſt feathered o'er
His ruined ſides and ſummit hoar,
While on the north, through middle air,
Ben-an heaved high his forehead bare.

XV.

From the ſteep promontory gazed
The Stranger, raptured and amazed ;
And, "What a ſcene were here," he cried,
"For princely pomp or churchman's pride !
On this bold brow, a lordly tower ;
In that ſoft vale, a lady's bower ;
On yonder meadow, far away,
The turrets of a cloiſter grey.

How blythely might the bugle horn
Chide, on the lake, the lingering morn !
How ſweet, at eve, the lover's lute
Chime, when the groves were ſtill and mute !
And, when the midnight moon ſhould lave
Her forehead in the ſilver wave,
How ſolemn on the ear would come
The holy matin's diſtant hum,
While the deep peal's commanding tone
Should wake, in yonder iſlet lone,
A ſainted hermit from his cell,
To drop a bead with every knell !—
And bugle, lute, and bell, and all,
Should each bewildered ſtranger call
To friendly feaſt, and lighted hall.

XVI.

"Blythe were it then to wander here !
But now—beſhrew yon nimble deer !—
Like that ſame hermit's, thin and ſpare,
The copſe muſt give my evening fare ;
Some moſſy bank my couch muſt be,
Some ruſtling oak my canopy.
Yet paſs we that—the war and chaſe
Give little choice of reſting place ;—

How blythely might the bugle horn
Chide, on the lake, the lingering morn !
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And, when the midnight moon ſhould lave
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Give little choice of reſting place ;—

ELLEN'S ISLE.

p. 15.

A ſummer night, in green-wood ſpent,
Were but to-morrow's merriment ;
But hoſts may in theſe wilds abound,
Such as are better miſſed than found ;
To meet with highland plunderers here
Were worſe than loſs of ſteed or deer.
I am alone ;—my bugle ſtrain
May call ſome ſtraggler of the train ;
Or, fall the worſt that may betide,
Ere now this faulchion has been tried."

XVII.

But ſcarce again his horn he wound,
When lo ! forth ſtarting at the ſound,
From underneath an aged oak,
That ſlanted from the iſlet rock,
A Damſel, guider of its way,
A little ſkiff ſhot to the bay,
That round the promontory ſteep
Led its deep line in graceful ſweep,
Eddying, in almoſt viewleſs wave,
The weeping willow twig to lave,
And kiſs, with whiſpering ſound and ſlow,
The beach of pebbles bright as ſnow.
The boat had touch'd this ſilver ſtrand,
Juſt as the Hunter left his ſtand,

And ſtood concealed amid the brake,
To view this Lady of the Lake.
The maiden pauſed, as if again
She thought to catch the diſtant ſtrain,
With head up-raiſed, and look intent,
And eye and ear attentive bent,
And locks flung back, and lips apart,
Like monument of Grecian art,
In liſtening mood, ſhe ſeemed to ſtand
The guardian Naiad of the ſtrand.

XVIII.

And ne'er did Grecian chiſel trace
A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace,
Of finer form, or lovelier face!
What though the ſun, with ardent frown,
Had ſlightly tinged her cheek with brown—
The ſportive toil, which, ſhort and light,
Had dyed her glowing hue ſo bright,
Served too in haſtier ſwell to ſhow
Short glimpſes of a breaſt of ſnow;
What though no rule of courtly grace
To meaſured mood had trained her pace—
A foot more light, a ſtep more true,
Ne'er from the heath-flower daſhed the dew;

E'en the ſlight hare-bell raiſed its head,
Elaſtic from her airy tread :
What though upon her ſpeech there hung
The accents of the mountain tongue—
Thoſe ſilver ſounds, ſo ſoft, ſo dear,
The liſtener held his breath to hear.

XIX.

A chieftain's daughter ſeemed the maid;
Her ſatin ſnood, her ſilken plaid,
Her golden brooch, ſuch birth betray'd.
And ſeldom was a ſnood amid
Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,
Whoſe gloſſy black to ſhame might bring
The plumage of the raven's wing ;
And ſeldom o'er a breaſt ſo fair,
Mantled a plaid with modeſt care;
And never brooch the folds combined
Above a heart more good and kind.
Her kindneſs and her worth to ſpy,
You need but gaze on Ellen's eye ;
Not Katrine, in her mirror blue,
Gives back the ſhaggy banks more true,
Than every free-born glance confeſſed
The guileleſs movements of her breaſt ;

Whether joy danced in her dark eye,
Or woe or pity claimed a ſigh,
Or filial love was glowing there,
Or meek devotion poured a prayer,
Or tale of injury called forth
The indignant ſpirit of the north.
One only paſſion, unrevealed,
With maiden pride the maid concealed,
Yet not leſs purely felt the flame;—
Oh need I tell that paſſion's name?

XX.

Impatient of the ſilent horn,
Now on the gale her voice was borne:—
"Father!" ſhe cried—the rocks around
Loved to prolong the gentle ſound.
Awhile ſhe pauſed, no anſwer came—
"Malcolm, was thine the blaſt?" the name
Leſs reſolutely uttered fell,
The echoes could not catch the ſwell.
"A Stranger, I," the Huntſman ſaid,
Advancing from the hazel ſhade.
The maid alarmed, with haſty oar,
Puſhed her light ſhallop from the ſhore,
And, when a ſpace was gained between,
Cloſer ſhe drew her boſom's ſcreen;

(So forth the ſtartled ſwan would ſwing,
So turn to prune his ruffled wing;)
Then ſafe, though fluttered and amazed,
She pauſed, and on the ſtranger gazed.
Not his the form, nor his the eye,
That youthful maidens wont to fly.

XXI.

On his bold viſage middle age
Had ſlightly preſſed its ſignet ſage,
Yet had not quenched the open truth,
And fiery vehemence of youth;
Forward and frolic glee was there,
The will to do, the ſoul to dare,
The ſparkling glance, ſoon blown to fire,
Of haſty love, or headlong ire.
His limbs were caſt in manly mould,
For hardy ſports, or conteſt bold;
And though in peaceful garb arrayed,
And weaponleſs, except his blade,
His ſtately mien as well implied
A high-born heart, a martial pride,
As if a baron's creſt he wore,
And ſheathed in armour trod the ſhore.
Slighting the petty need he ſhowed,
He told of his benighted road:

His ready ſpeech flowed fair and free,
In phraſe of gentleſt courteſy ;
Yet ſeemed that tone and geſture bland
Leſs uſed to ſue than to command.

XXII.

Awhile the maid the ſtranger eyed,
And, reaſſured, at laſt replied,
That highland halls were open ſtill
To wildered wanderers of the hill.
"Nor think you unexpected come
To yon lone iſle, our deſert home :
Before the heath had loſt the dew,
This morn, a couch was pulled for you ;
On yonder mountain's purple head
Have ptarmigan and heath-cock bled,
And our broad nets have ſwept the mere,
To furniſh forth your evening cheer."
"Now, by the rood, my lovely maid,
Your courteſy has erred," he ſaid ;
"No right have I to claim, miſplaced,
The welcome of expected gueſt.
A wanderer, here by fortune toſt,
My way, my friends, my courſer loſt,
I ne'er before, believe me, fair,
Have ever drawn your mountain air,

Till on this lake's romantic ſtrand,
I found a fay in fairy land."

XXIII.

"I well believe," the maid replied,
As her light ſkiff approached the ſide—
"I well believe, that ne'er before
Your foot has trod Loch-Katrine's ſhore;
But yet, as far as yeſternight,
Old Allan-Bane foretold your plight—
A grey-haired ſire, whoſe eye intent
Was on the viſioned future bent.
He ſaw your ſteed, a dappled grey,
Lie dead beneath the birchen way;
Painted exact your form and mien,
Your hunting ſuit of Lincoln green,
That taſſell'd horn ſo gaily gilt,
That faulchion's crooked blade and hilt,
That cap with heron's plumage trim,
And yon two hounds ſo dark and grim.
He bade that all ſhould ready be,
To grace a gueſt of fair degree;
But light I held his prophecy,
And deemed it was my father's horn,
Whoſe echoes o'er the lake were borne."

XXIV.

The Stranger ſmiled :—"Since to your home,
A deſtined errant knight I come,
Announced by prophet ſooth and old,
Doomed, doubtleſs, for achievement bold,
I'll lightly front each high emprize,
For one kind glance of thoſe bright eyes ;
Permit me, firſt, the taſk to guide
Your fairy frigate o'er the tide."
The maid, with ſmile ſuppreſſed and ſly,
The toil unwonted ſaw him try ;
For ſeldom, ſure, if e'er before,
His noble hand had graſped an oar :
Yet with main ſtrength his ſtrokes he drew,
And o'er the lake the ſhallop flew ;
With heads erect and whimpering cry,
The hounds behind their paſſage ply.
Nor frequent does the bright oar break
The darkening mirror of the lake,
Until the rocky iſle they reach,
And moor their ſhallop on the beach.

XXV.

The Stranger viewed the ſhore around ;
'Twas all ſo cloſe with copſe-wood bound,

Nor track nor pathway might declare
That human foot frequented there,
Until the mountain-maiden ſhowed
A clambering unſuſpected road,
That winded through the tangled ſcreen,
And opened on a narrow green,
Where weeping birch and willow round
With their long fibres ſwept the ground ;
Here for retreat in dangerous hour,
Some chief had framed a ruſtic bower.

XXVI.

It was a lodge of ample ſize,
But ſtrange of ſtructure and device ;
Of ſuch materials, as around
The workman's hand had readieſt found.
Lopped of their boughs, their hoar trunks bared,
And by the hatchet rudely ſquared,
To give the walls their deſtined height,
The ſturdy oak and aſh unite ;
While moſs, and clay, and leaves combined
To fence each crevice from the wind.
The lighter pine-trees, over-head,
Their ſlender length for rafters ſpread,
And withered heath and ruſhes dry
Supplied a ruſſet canopy.

Due weſtward, fronting to the green,
A rural portico was ſeen,
Aloft on native pillars borne,
Of mountain fir with bark unſhorn,
Where Ellen's hand had taught to twine
The ivy and Idæan vine,
The clematis, the favoured flower,
Which boaſts the name of virgin-bower,
And every hardy plant could bear
Loch-Katrine's keen and ſearching air.
An inſtant in this porch ſhe ſtaid,
And gaily to the ſtranger ſaid,
"On heaven and on thy lady call,
And enter the enchanted hall!"

XXVII.

"My hope, my heaven, my truſt muſt be,
My gentle guide, in following thee."
He croſſed the threſhold—and a clang
Of angry ſteel that inſtant rang.
To his bold brow his ſpirit ruſhed,
But ſoon for vain alarm he bluſhed,
When on the floor he ſaw diſplayed,
Cauſe of the din, a naked blade
Dropped from the ſheath, that careleſs flung
Upon a ſtag's huge antlers ſwung;

For all around, the walls to grace,
Hung trophies of the fight or chaſe :
A target there, a bugle here,
A battle-axe, a hunting ſpear,
And broad-ſwords, bows, and arrows ſtore,
With the tuſked trophies of the boar.
Here grins the wolf as when he died,
And there the wild cat's brindled hide
The frontlet of the elk adorns,
Or mantles o'er the biſon's horns ;
Pennons and flags defaced and ſtained,
That blackening ſtreaks of blood retained,
And deer-ſkins, dappled, dun, and white,
With otter's fur and ſeal's unite,
In rude and uncouth tapeſtry all,
To garniſh forth the ſylvan hall.

XXVIII.

The wondering Stranger round him gazed,
And next the fallen weapon raiſed ;
Few were the arms whoſe ſinewy ſtrength
Sufficed to ſtretch it forth at length.
And as the brand he poiſed and ſwayed,
"I never knew but one," he ſaid,
"Whoſe ſtalwart arm might brook to wield
A blade like this in battle field."

She ſighed, then ſmiled and took the word;
"You ſee the guardian champion's ſword:
As light it trembles in his hand,
As in my graſp a hazel wand;
My ſire's tall form might grace the part
Of Ferragus, or Aſcabart;
But in the abſent giant's hold
Are women now, and menials old."

XXIX.

The miſtreſs of the manſion came,
Mature of age, a graceful dame;
Whoſe eaſy ſtep and ſtately port
Had well become a princely court,
To whom, though more than kindred knew,
Young Ellen gave a mother's due.
Meet welcome to her gueſt ſhe made,
And every courteous right was paid,
That hoſpitality could claim,
Though all unaſked his birth and name.
Such then the reverence to a gueſt,
That felleſt foe might join the feaſt,
And from his deadlieſt foeman's door
Unqueſtioned turn, the banquet o'er.
At length his rank the Stranger names—
"The knight of Snowdoun, James Fitz-James;

Lord of a barren heritage,
Which his brave ſires, from age to age,
By their good ſwords had held with toil;
His ſire had fallen in ſuch turmoil,
And he, God wot, was forced to ſtand
Oft for his right with blade in hand.
This morning with Lord Moray's train
He chaſed a ſtalwart ſtag in vain,
Outſtripped his comrades, miſſed the deer,
Loſt his good ſteed, and wandered here."

XXX.

Fain would the Knight in turn require
The name and ſtate of Ellen's ſire;
Well ſhowed the elder lady's mien,
That courts and cities ſhe had ſeen;
Ellen, though more her looks diſplayed
The ſimple grace of ſylvan maid,
In ſpeech and geſture, form and face,
Showed ſhe was come of gentle race;
'Twere ſtrange in ruder rank to find
Such looks, ſuch manners, and ſuch mind.
Each hint the Knight of Snowdoun gave,
Dame Margaret heard with ſilence grave;
Or Ellen, innocently gay,
Turned all inquiry light away.

"Wierd women we! by dale and down,
We dwell afar from tower and town.
We ſtem the flood, we ride the blaſt,
On wandering knights our ſpells we caſt;
While viewleſs minſtrels touch the ſtring,
'Tis thus our charmed rhymes we ſing."
She ſang, and ſtill a harp unſeen
Filled up the ſymphony between.

XXXI.

Song.

"Soldier, reſt! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the ſleep that knows not breaking;
Dream of battled fields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.
In our iſle's enchanted hall,
Hands unſeen thy couch are ſtrewing,
Fairy ſtrains of muſic fall,
Every ſenſe in ſlumber dewing.
Soldier, reſt! thy warfare o'er,
Dream of fighting fields no more;
Sleep the ſleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

"No rude ſound ſhall reach thine ear,
Armour's clang, or war-ſteed champing,
Trump nor pibroch ſummon here
Muſtering clan, or ſquadron tramping.

Yet the lark's ſhrill life may come
  At the day-break from the fallow,
And the bittern ſound his drum,
  Booming from the ſedgy ſhallow.
Ruder ſounds ſhall none be near,
Guards nor warders challenge here,
Here's no war-ſteed's neigh and champing,
Shouting clans or ſquadrons ſtamping."

XXXII.

She pauſed—then, bluſhing, led the lay
To grace the ſtranger of the day;
Her mellow notes awhile prolong
The cadence of the flowing ſong,
Till to her lips in meaſured frame
The minſtrel verſe ſpontaneous came.

Song continued.

"Huntſman, reſt! thy chaſe is done,
  While our ſlumbrous ſpells aſſail ye,
Dream not, with the riſing ſun,
  Bugles here ſhall ſound reveillie.
Sleep! the deer is in his den;
  Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying;
Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen,
  How thy gallant ſteed lay dying.
Huntſman, reſt! thy chaſe is done,
Think not of the riſing ſun,
For at dawning to aſſail ye,
Here no bugles ſound reveillie.

XXXIII.

The hall was cleared—the Stranger's bed
Was there of mountain heather ſpread,
Where oft an hundred gueſts had lain,
And dreamed their foreſt ſports again.
But vainly did the heath-flower ſhed
Its moorland fragrance round his head;
Not Ellen's ſpell had lulled to reſt
The fever of his troubled breaſt.
In broken dreams the image roſe
Of varied perils, pains, and woes;
His ſteed now flounders in the brake,
Now ſinks his barge upon the lake;
Now leader of a broken hoſt,
His ſtandard falls, his honour's loſt.
Then—from my couch may heavenly might
Chaſe that worſt phantom of the night!—
Again returned the ſcenes of youth,
Of confident undoubting truth;
Again his ſoul he interchanged
With friends whoſe hearts were long eſtranged.
They come in dim proceſſion led,
The cold, the faithleſs, and the dead;
As warm each hand, each brow as gay,
As if they parted yeſterday.

And doubt diſtracts him at the view,
Oh were his ſenſes falſe or true!
Dreamed he of death, or broken vow,
Or is it all a viſion now!

XXXIV.

At length, with Ellen in a grove,
He ſeemed to walk, and ſpeak of love;
She liſtened with a bluſh and ſigh;
His ſuit was warm, his hopes were high.
He ſought her yielded hand to claſp,
And a cold gauntlet met his graſp;
The phantom's ſex was changed and gone,
Upon its head a helmet ſhone;
Slowly enlarged to giant ſize,
With darkened cheek and threatening eyes,
The griſly viſage, ſtern and hoar,
To Ellen ſtill a likeneſs bore.
He woke, and, panting with affright,
Recalled the viſion of the night.
The hearth's decaying brands were red,
And deep and duſky luſtre ſhed,
Half ſhowing, half concealing all
The uncouth trophies of the hall.
Mid thoſe the ſtranger fixed his eye
Where that huge faulchion hung on high,

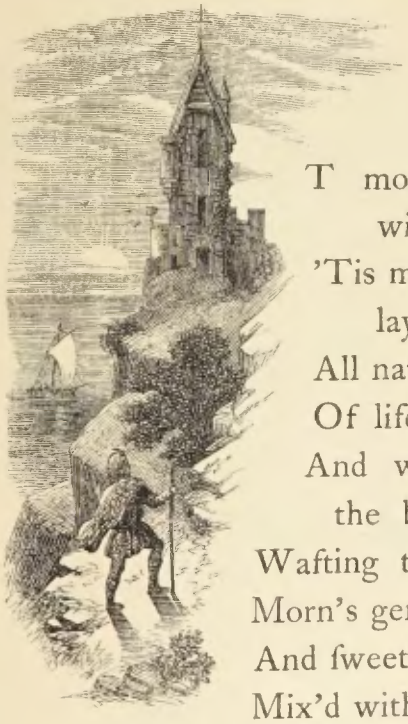
And thoughts on thoughts, a countleſs throng,
Ruſhed, chaſing countleſs thoughts along,
Until, the giddy whirl to cure,
He roſe, and ſought the moonſhine pure.

XXXV.

The wild roſe, eglantine, and broom,
Waſted around their rich perfume;
The birch-trees wept in fragrant balm,
The aſpens ſlept beneath the calm;
The ſilver light with quivering glance,
Played on the water's ſtill expanſe—
Wild were the heart whoſe paſſion's ſway
Could rage beneath the ſober ray!
He felt its calm, that warrior gueſt,
While thus he communed with his breaſt:—
"Why is it at each turn I trace
Some memory of that exiled race?
Can I not mountain maiden ſpy,
But ſhe muſt bear the Douglas eye?
Can I not view a highland brand,
But it muſt match the Douglas hand?
Can I not frame a fevered dream,
But ſtill the Douglas is the theme?—
I'll dream no more—by manly mind
Not even in ſleep is will reſigned.

My midnight oriſon ſaid o'er,
I'll turn to reſt, and dream no more."
His midnight oriſon he told,
A prayer with every bead of gold,
Conſigned to Heaven his cares and woes,
And ſank in undiſturbed repoſe;
Until the heath-cock ſhrilly crew,
And morning dawned on Ben-venue.

Canto Second.—The Island.



I.

T morn the black-cock trims his jetty wing,
'Tis morning prompts the linnet's blytheſt lay,
All nature's children feel the matin ſpring
Of life reviving, with reviving day;
And while yon little bark glides down the bay,
Wafting the ſtranger on his way again,
Morn's genial influence rouſed a minſtrel grey,
And ſweetly o'er the lake was heard thy ſtrain,
Mix'd with the ſounding harp, oh white-haired Allan-Bane!

II.

Song.

"Not faſter yonder rowers' might
Flings from their oars the ſpray,
Not faſter yonder rippling bright,
That tracks the ſhallop's courſe in light,
Melts in the lake away,

Than men from memory erafe
The benefits of former days;
Then, Stranger, go! good fpeed the while,
Nor think again of the lonely ifle.

"High place to thee in royal court,
High place in battled line,
Good hawk and hound for fylvan fport,
Where Beauty fees the brave refort,
The honoured meed be thine!
True be thy fword, thy friend fincere,
Thy lady conftant, kind, and dear,
And loft in love's and friendfhip's fmile,
Be memory of the lonely ifle.

III.

Song continued.

"But if beneath yon fouthern fky
A plaided ftranger roam,
Whofe drooping creft and ftifled figh,
And sunken cheek and heavy eye,
Pine for his highland home;
Then, warrior, then be thine to fhow
The care that foothes a wanderer's woe;
Remember then thy hap ere while
A ftranger in the lonely ifle.

"Or if on life's uncertain main
Mifhap fhall mar thy fail;
If faithful, wife, and brave in vain,
Woe, want, and exile thou fuftain
Beneath the fickle gale;

LOCH KATRINE.

p. 36.

Waſte not a ſigh on fortune changed,
On thankleſs courts, or friends eſtranged,
But come where kindred worth ſhall ſmile,
To greet thee in the lonely iſle."

IV.

As died the ſounds upon the tide,
The ſhallop reached the main-land ſide,
And ere his onward way he took,
The Stranger caſt a lingering look,
Where eaſily his eye might reach
The Harper on the iſlet beach,
Reclined againſt a blighted tree,
As waſted, grey, and worn as he.
To minſtrel meditation given,
His reverend brow was raiſed to heaven,
As from the riſing ſun to claim
A ſparkle of inſpiring flame.
His hand, reclined upon the wire,
Seemed watching the awakening fire;
So ſtill he ſate, as thoſe who wait
Till judgment ſpeak the doom of fate;
So ſtill, as if no breeze might dare
To lift one lock of hoary hair;
So ſtill as life itself were fled,
In the laſt ſound his harp had ſped.

V.

Upon a rock with lichens wild,
Beſide him Ellen ſate and ſmiled.
Smiled ſhe to ſee the ſtately drake
Lead forth his fleet upon the lake,
While her vexed ſpaniel, from the beach,
Bayed at the prize beyond his reach?
Yet tell me then, the maid who knows,
Why deepened on her cheek the roſe?—
Forgive, forgive, Fidelity!
Perchance the maiden ſmiled to ſee
Yon parting lingerer wave adieu,
And ſtop and turn to wave anew;
And, lovely ladies, ere your ire
Condemn the heroine of my lyre,
Show me the fair would ſcorn to ſpy,
And prize ſuch conqueſt of her eye!

VI.

While yet he loitered on the ſpot,
It ſeemed as Ellen marked him not,
But when he turned him to the glade,
One courteous parting ſign ſhe made;
And after, oft the knight would ſay,
That not when prize of feſtal day

Was dealt him by the brighteſt fair
Who e'er wore jewel in her hair,
So highly did his boſom ſwell,
As at that ſimple mute farewell.
Now with a truſty mountain guide,
And his dark ſtag-hounds by his ſide,
He parts—the maid, unconſcious ſtill,
Watch'd him wind ſlowly round the hill;
But when the ſtately form was hid,
The guardian in her boſom chid—
"Thy Malcolm! vain and ſelfiſh maid!"
'Twas thus upbraiding conſcience ſaid;
"Not ſo had Malcolm idly hung
On the ſmooth phraſe of ſouthern tongue;
Not ſo had Malcolm ſtrained his eye
Another ſtep than thine to ſpy."
"Wake, Allan-Bane!" aloud ſhe cried,
To the old Minſtrel by her ſide,
"Arouſe thee from thy moody dream!
I'll give thy harp heroic theme,
And warm thee with a noble name;
Pour forth the glory of the Græme."
Scarce from her lip the word had ruſhed,
When deep the conſcious maiden bluſhed,
For of his clan, in hall and bower,
Young Malcolm Græme was held the flower.

VII.

The minſtrel waked his harp—three times
Aroſe the well-known martial chimes,
And thrice their high heroic pride
In melancholy murmurs died.
"Vainly thou bidſt, oh noble maid!"
Claſping his withered hands, he ſaid,
"Vainly thou bidſt me wake the ſtrain,
Though all unwont to bid in vain.
Alas! than mine a mightier hand
Has tuned my harp, my ſtrings has ſpanned;
I touch the chords of joy, but low
And mournful anſwer notes of woe;
And the proud march, which victors tread,
Sinks in the wailing for the dead.
O well for me, if mine alone
That dirge's deep, prophetic tone!
If, as my tuneful fathers ſaid,
This harp, which erſt Saint Modan ſwayed,
Can thus its maſter's fate foretell,
Then welcome be the minſtrel's knell!

VIII.

"But ah! dear lady, thus it ſighed
The eve thy fainted mother died;

And ſuch the ſounds which, while I ſtrove
To wake a lay of war or love,
Came marring all the feſtal mirth,
Appalling me who gave them birth ;
And, diſobedient to my call,
Wailed loud through Bothwell's bannered hall,
Ere Douglaſſes, to ruin driven,
Were exiled from their native heaven.
Oh ! if yet worſe miſhap and woe
My maſter's houſe muſt undergo,
Or aught but weal to Ellen fair,
Brood in theſe accents of deſpair,
No future bard, ſad harp ! ſhall fling
Triumph or rapture from thy ſtring ;
One ſhort, one final ſtrain ſhall flow,
Fraught with unutterable woe,
Then ſhivered ſhall thy fragments lie,
Thy maſter caſt him down and die."

IX.

Soothing ſhe anſwered him, "Aſſuage,
Mine honoured friend, the fears of age ;
All melodies to thee are known,
That harp has rung, or pipe has blown,
In lowland vale, or highland glen,
From Tweed to Spey—what marvel, then,

At times, unbidden notes ſhould riſe,
Confuſedly bound in memory's ties,
Entangling, as they ruſh along,
The war-march with the funeral ſong?
Small ground is now for boding fear;
Obſcure, but ſafe, we reſt us here.
My ſire, in native virtue great,
Reſigning lordſhip, lands, and ſtate,
Not then to fortune more reſigned,
Than yonder oak might give the wind;
The graceful foliage ſtorms may reave,
The noble ſtem they cannot grieve.
For me"—ſhe ſtooped, and, looking round,
Plucked a blue hare-bell from the ground,
"For me, whoſe memory ſcarce conveys
An image of more ſplendid days,
This little flower, that loves the lea,
May well my ſimple emblem be;
It drinks heaven's dew as blithe as roſe
That in the King's own garden grows,
And when I place it in my hair,
Allan, a bard is bound to ſwear
He ne'er ſaw coronet ſo fair."
Then playfully the chaplet wild
She wreathed in her dark locks, and ſmiled.

X.

Her ſmile, her ſpeech, with winning ſway,
Wiled the old harper's mood away.
With ſuch a look as hermits throw
When angels ſtoop to ſoothe their woe,
He gazed, till fond regret and pride
Thrilled to a tear, then thus replied :—
"Loveliest and beſt ! thou little know'ſt
The rank, the honours thou haſt loſt !
Oh might I live to ſee thee grace,
In Scotland's court, thy birthright place,
To ſee my favourite's ſtep advance,
The lighteſt in the courtly dance,
The cauſe of every gallant's ſigh,
And leading ſtar of every eye,
And theme of every minſtrel's art,
The lady of the Bleeding Heart !"

XI.

"Fair dreams are theſe," the maiden cried,
(Light was her accent, yet ſhe ſighed,)
"Yet is this moſſy rock to me
Worth ſplendid chair and canopy;
Nor would my footſtep ſpring more gay
In courtly dance than blythe ſtrathſpey,

Nor half ſo pleaſed mine ear incline
To royal minſtrel's lay as thine ;
And then for ſuitors proud and high,
To bend before my conquering eye,
Thou, flattering bard ! thyſelf wilt ſay,
That grim Sir Roderick owns its ſway.
The Saxon ſcourge, Clan-Alpine's pride,
The terror of Loch-Lomond's ſide,
Would, at my ſuit, thou know'ſt, delay
A Lennox foray—for a day."

XII.

The ancient bard his glee repreſſed :
" Ill haſt thou choſen theme for jeſt !
For who, through all this weſtern wild,
Named Black Sir Roderick e'er, and ſmiled ?
In Holy-Rood a knight he ſlew ;
I ſaw, when back the dirk he drew,
Courtiers give place before the ſtride
Of the undaunted homicide.
And ſince, though outlawed, hath his hand,
Full ſternly kept his mountain land.
Who elſe dared give—ah ! woe the day,
That I ſuch hated truth ſhould ſay—
The Douglas, like a ſtrickened deer,
Diſowned by every noble peer,
Even the rude refuge we have here ?

Alas, this wild marauding chief,
Alone might hazard our relief,
And now thy maiden charms expand,
Looks for his guerdon in thy hand ;
Full ſoon may diſpenſation ſought,
To back his ſuit, from Rome be brought.
Then, though an exile on the hill,
Thy father, as the Douglas, ſtill
Be held in reverence and fear.
But though to Roderick thou'rt ſo dear,
That thou might'ſt guide with ſilken thread,
Slave of thy will, this chieftain dread ;
Yet, oh loved maid, thy mirth refrain !
Thy hand is on a lion's mane."

XIII.

"Minſtrel," the maid replied, and high
Her father's ſoul glanced from her eye,
"My debts to Roderick's houſe I know :
All that a mother could beſtow,
To Lady Margaret's care I owe,
Since firſt an orphan in the wild,
She ſorrowed o'er her ſiſter's child ;
To her brave chieftain ſon, from ire
Of Scotland's king who ſhrouds my ſire,
A deeper, holier debt is owed ;
And, could I pay it with my blood,

Allan ! Sir Roderick ſhould command
My blood, my life—but not my hand.
Rather will Ellen Douglas dwell
A votareſs in Maronnan's cell ;
Rather through realms beyond the ſea,
Seeking the world's cold charity,
Where ne'er was ſpoke a Scottiſh word,
And ne'er the name of Douglas heard,
An outcaſt pilgrim will ſhe rove,
Than wed the man ſhe cannot love.

XIV.

" Thou ſhak'ſt, good friend, thy treſſes grey—
That pleading look, what can it ſay,
But what I own ?—I grant him brave,
But wild as Bracklinn's thundering wave ;
And generous—ſave vindictive mood,
Or jealous tranſport chafe his blood :
I grant him true to friendly band
As his claymore is to his hand :
But oh ! that very blade of ſteel
More mercy for a foe would feel :
I grant him liberal, to fling
Among his clan the wealth they bring.
When back by lake and glen they wind,
And in the Lowland leave behind,

Where once ſome pleaſant hamlet ſtood,
A maſs of aſhes ſlaked with blood.
The hand, that for my father fought,
I honour, as his daughter ought ;
But can I claſp it reeking red,
From peaſants ſlaughtered in their ſhed ?
No ! wildly while his virtues gleam,
They make his paſſions darker ſeem,
And flaſh along his ſpirit high,
Like lightning o'er the midnight ſky.
While yet a child—and children know,
Inſtinctive taught, the friend and foe—
I ſhuddered at his brow of gloom,
His ſhadowy plaid and ſable plume ;
A maiden grown, I ill could bear
His haughty mien and lordly air ;
But, if thou join'ſt a ſuitor's claim,
In ſerious mood, to Roderick's name,
I thrill with anguiſh ! or, if e'er
A Douglas knew the word, with fear.
To change ſuch odious theme were beſt—
What think'ſt thou of our ſtranger gueſt ? "

XV.

" What think I of him ? woe the while
That brought ſuch wanderer to our iſle !

Thy father's battle-brand, of yore
For Tine-man forged by fairy lore,
What time he leagued, no longer foes,
His Border ſpears with Hotſpur's bows,
Did, ſelf-unſcabbarded, fore-ſhow
The footſtep of a ſecret foe.
If courtly ſpy, and harboured here,
What may we for the Douglas fear ?
What for this iſland, deemed of old
Clan-Alpine's laſt and ſureſt hold ?
If neither ſpy nor foe, I pray
What yet may jealous Roderick ſay ?
—Nay, wave not thy diſdainful head !
Bethink thee of the diſcord dread,
That kindled when at Beltane game,
Thou ledſt the dance with Malcolm Græme ;
Still, though thy ſire the peace renewed,
Smoulders in Roderick's breaſt the feud ;
Beware !—But hark, what ſounds are theſe ?
My dull ears catch no faltering breeze,
No weeping birch, nor aſpens wake,
Nor breath is dimpling in the lake,
Still is the canna's hoary beard,
Yet, by my minſtrel faith, I heard—
And hark again ! ſome pipe of war
Sends the bold pibroch from afar."

XVI.

Far up the lengthened lake were ſpied
Four darkening ſpecks upon the tide,
That, ſlow enlarging on the view,
Four manned and maſted barges grew,
And bearing downwards from Glengyle,
Steered full upon the lonely iſle ;
The point of Brianchoil they paſſed,
And, to the windward as they caſt,
Againſt the ſun they gave to ſhine
The bold Sir Roderick's bannered pine.
Nearer and nearer as they bear,
Spears, pikes, and axes, flaſh in air.
Now might you ſee the tartans brave,
And plaids and plumage dance and wave ;
Now ſee the bonnets ſink and riſe,
As his tough oar the rower plies ;
See, flaſhing at each ſturdy ſtroke,
The wave aſcending into ſmoke ;
See the proud pipers on the bow,
And mark the gaudy ſtreamers flow
From their loud chanters down, and ſweep
The furrowed boſom of the deep,
As, ruſhing through the lake amain,
They plied the ancient Highland ſtrain.

XVII.

Ever, as on they bore, more loud
And louder rung the pibroch proud.
At firſt the ſounds, by diſtance tame,
Mellowed along the waters came,
And, lingering long by cape and bay,
Wailed every harſher note away ;
Then, burſting bolder on the ear,
The clan's ſhrill Gathering they could hear ;
Thoſe thrilling ſounds, that called the might
Of old Clan-Alpine to the fight.
Thick beat the rapid notes, as when
The muſtering hundreds ſhake the glen,
And, hurrying at the ſignal dread,
The battered earth returns their tread.
Then prelude light, of livelier tone,
Expreſſed their merry marching on,
Ere peal of cloſing battle roſe,
With mingled outcry, ſhrieks, and blows ;
And mimic din of ſtroke and ward,
As broad-ſword upon target jarred ;
And groaning pauſe, ere yet again,
Condenſed, the battle yelled amain ;
The rapid charge, the rallying ſhout,
Retreat borne headlong into rout,

And burſts of triumph, to declare
Clan-Alpine's conqueſt—all were there.
Nor ended thus the ſtrain; but ſlow,
Sunk in a moan prolonged and low,
And changed the conquering clarion ſwell,
For wild lament o'er thoſe that fell.

XVIII.

The war-pipes ceaſed; but lake and hill
Were buſy with their echoes ſtill;
And, when they ſlept, a vocal ſtrain
Bade their hoarſe chorus wake again,
While loud an hundred clanſmen raiſe
Their voices in their Chieftain's praiſe.
Each boatman, bending to his oar,
With meaſured ſweep the burthen bore,
In ſuch wild cadence, as the breeze
Makes through December's leafleſs trees.
The chorus firſt could Allan know,
"Roderigh Vich Alpine, ho! iro!"
And near, and nearer as they rowed,
Diſtinct the martial ditty flowed.

XIX.

Boat Song.

Hail to the chief who in triumph advances!
  Honoured and bleſſed be the ever-green Pine!
Long may the Tree in his banner that glances
  Flouriſh, the ſhelter and grace of our line!
    Heaven ſend it happy dew,
    Earth lend it ſap anew,
  Gaily to bourgeon, and broadly to grow,
    While every highland glen
    Sends our ſhout back agen,
  "Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

Ours is no ſapling, chance-ſown by the fountain,
  Blooming at Beltane, in winter to fade;
When the whirlwind has ſtripped every leaf on the mountain,
  The more ſhall Clan-Alpine exult in her ſhade.
    Moored in the rifted rock,
    Proof to the tempeſt's ſhock,
  Firmer he roots him the ruder it blow;
    Menteith and Breadalbane, then,
    Echo his praiſe agen,
  "Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

XX.

Proudly our pibroch has thrilled in Glen Fruin,
  And Banachar's groans to our ſlogan replied;
Glen Luſs and Roſs-dhu, they are ſmoking in ruin,
  And the beſt of Loch-Lomond lie dead on her ſide.
    Widow and Saxon maid
    Long ſhall lament our raid,
  Think of Clan-Alpine with fear and with woe;
    Lennox and Leven-glen
    Shake when they hear agen,
  "Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

Row, vaſſals, row, for the pride of the Highlands!
Stretch to your oars, for the ever-green Pine!
Oh! that the roſe-bud that graces yon iſlands,
Were wreathed in a garland around him to twine!
Oh that ſome ſeedling gem,
Worthy ſuch noble ſtem,
Honoured and bleſſed in their ſhadow might grow!
Loud ſhould Clan-Alpine then
Ring from her deepmoſt glen,
"Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

XXI.

With all her joyful female band,
Had Lady Margaret ſought the ſtrand.
Looſe on the breeze their treſſes flew,
And high their ſnowy arms they threw,
As echoing back with ſhrill acclaim
And chorus wild the chieftain's name;
While, prompt to pleaſe, with mother's art,
The darling paſſion of his heart,
The Dame called Ellen to the ſtrand,
To greet her kinſman ere he land;
"Come, loiterer, come! a Douglas thou,
And ſhun to wreathe a victor's brow?"
Reluctantly and ſlow, the maid
The unwelcome ſummoning obeyed,
And, when a diſtant bugle rung
In the mid-path aſide ſhe ſprung:

"Lift, Allan-Bane! from mainland caſt,
I hear my father's ſignal blaſt.
Be ours," ſhe cried, "the ſkiff to guide,
And waft him from the mountain ſide."
Then, like a ſunbeam ſwift and bright,
She darted to her ſhallop light,
And, eagerly while Roderick ſcanned,
For her dear form, his mother's band,
The iſlet far behind her lay,
And ſhe had landed in the bay.

XXII.

Some feelings are to mortals given,
With leſs of earth in them than heaven;
And if there be a human tear
From paſſion's droſs refined and clear,
A tear ſo limpid and ſo meek,
It would not ſtain an angel's cheek,
'Tis that which pious fathers ſhed
Upon a duteous daughter's head!
And as the Douglas to his breaſt
His darling Ellen cloſely preſſed,
Such holy drops her treſſes ſteep'd,
Though 'twas an hero's eye that weep'd.
Nor while on Ellen's faltering tongue
Her filial welcomes crowded hung,

Marked ſhe, that fear (affection's proof)
Still held a graceful youth aloof;
No! not till Douglas named his name,
Although the youth was Malcolm Græme.

XXIII.

Allan, with wiſtful look the while,
Marked Roderick landing on the iſle;
His maſter piteouſly he eyed,
Then gazed upon the chieftain's pride,
Then daſhed, with haſty hand, away
From his dimmed eye the gathering ſpray;
And Douglas, as his hand he laid
On Malcolm's ſhoulder, kindly ſaid,
"Canſt thou, young friend, no meaning ſpy
In my poor follower's gliſtening eye?
I'll tell thee:—he recalls the day,
When in my praiſe he led the lay
O'er the arched gate of Bothwell proud,
While many a minſtrel anſwered loud,
When Percy's Norman pennon, won
In bloody field, before me ſhone,
And twice ten knights, the leaſt a name
As mighty as yon chief may claim,
Gracing my pomp behind me came.

Yet truſt me, Malcolm, not ſo proud
Was I of all that marſhalled crowd,
Though the waned creſcent owned my might,
And in my train trooped lord and knight,
Though Blantyre hymned her holieſt lays,
And Bothwell's bards flung back my praiſe,
As when this old man's ſilent tear,
And this poor maid's affection dear,
A welcome give more kind and true,
Than aught my better fortunes knew.
Forgive, my friend, a father's boaſt;
Oh! it out-beggars all I loſt!"

XXIV.

Delightful praiſe!—like ſummer roſe,
That brighter in the dew-drop glows,
The baſhful maiden's cheek appeared—
For Douglas ſpoke, and Malcolm heard.
The fluſh of ſhame-faced joy to hide,
The hounds, the hawk, her cares divide;
The loved careſſes of the maid
The dogs with crouch and whimper paid;
And, at her whiſtle, on her hand
The falcon took his favourite ſtand,
Cloſed his dark wing, relaxed his eye,
Nor, though unhooded, ſought to fly.

And truſt, while in ſuch guiſe ſhe ſtood,
Like fabled Goddeſs of the Wood,
That if a father's partial thought
O'erweighed her worth and beauty aught,
Well might the lover's judgment fail
To balance with a juſter ſcale;
For with each ſecret glance he ſtole,
The fond enthuſiaſt ſent his ſoul.

XXV.

Of ſtature fair and ſlender frame,
But firmly knit, was Malcolm Græme.
The belted plaid and tartan hoſe
Did ne'er more graceful limbs diſcloſe;
His flaxen hair, of ſunny hue,
Curled cloſely round his bonnet blue;
Trained to the chaſe, his eagle eye
The ptarmigan in ſnow could ſpy;
Each paſs, by mountain, lake, and heath,
He knew, through Lennox and Menteith;
Vain was the bound of dark-brown doe,
When Malcolm bent his ſounding bow,
And ſcarce that doe, though winged with fear,
Outſtripp'd in ſpeed the mountaineer;
Right up Ben-Lomond could he preſs,
And not a ſob his toil confeſs.

His form accorded with a mind
Lively and ardent, frank and kind;
A blyther heart, till Ellen came,
Did never love nor ſorrow tame;
It danced as lightſome in his breaſt,
As played the feather on his creſt.
Yet friends, who neareſt knew the youth,
His ſcorn of wrong, his zeal for truth,
And bards, who ſaw his features bold,
When kindled by the tales of old,
Said, were that youth to manhood grown,
Not long ſhould Roderick Dhu's renown
Be foremoſt voiced by mountain fame,
But quail to that of Malcolm Græme.

XXVI.

Now back they wend their watery way,
And, "Oh my ſire!" did Ellen ſay,
"Why urge thy chaſe ſo far aſtray?
And why ſo late returned? And why"—
The reſt was in her ſpeaking eye.
"My child, the chaſe I follow far,
'Tis mimicry of noble war;
And with that gallant paſtime reft
Were all of Douglas I have left.

I met young Malcolm as I ſtrayed
Far eaſtward in Glenfinlas' ſhade,
Nor ſtrayed I ſafe; for, all around,
Hunters and horſemen ſcoured the ground.
This youth, though ſtill a royal ward,
Riſked life and land to be my guard,
And through the paſſes of the wood
Guided my ſteps not unpurſued;
And Roderick ſhall his welcome make,
Deſpite old ſpleen, for Douglas' ſake.
Then muſt he ſeek Strath-Endrick glen,
Nor peril aught for me agen."

XXVII.

Sir Roderick, who to meet them came,
Reddened at ſight of Malcolm Græme,
Yet, nor in action, word, or eye,
Failed aught in hoſpitality.
In talk and ſport they whiled away
The morning of that ſummer day;
But at high noon a courier light
Held ſecret parley with the knight,
Whoſe moody aſpect ſoon declared
That evil were the news he heard.
Deep thought ſeemed toiling in his head;
Yet was the evening banquet made,

Ere he aſſembled round the flame,
His mother, Douglas, and the Græme,
And Ellen too; then caſt around
His eyes, then fixed them on the ground,
As ſtudying phraſe that might avail
Beſt to convey unpleaſant tale.
Long with his dagger's hilt he played,
Then raiſed his haughty brow, and ſaid:—

XXVIII.

"Short be my ſpeech; nor time affords,
Nor my plain temper, glozing words.
Kinſman and father—if ſuch name
Douglas vouchſafe to Roderick's claim;
Mine honoured mother; Ellen—why,
My couſin, turn away thine eye?
And Græme, in whom I hope to know
Full ſoon a noble friend or foe,
When age ſhall give thee thy command,
And leading in thy native land—
Liſt all! The King's vindictive pride
Boaſts to have tamed the Border-ſide,
Where chiefs, with hound and hawk who came
To ſhare their monarch's ſylvan game,
Themſelves in bloody toils were ſnared,
And when the banquet they prepared,

GLENFINLAS.

p. 61.

And wide their loyal portals flung,
O'er their own gateway ſtruggling hung.
Loud cries their blood from Meggat's mead,
From Yarrow braes, and banks of Tweed,
Where the lone ſtreams of Ettrick glide,
And from the ſilver Teviot's ſide;
The dales, where martial clans did ride,
Are now one ſheep-walk waſte and wide.
This tyrant of the Scottiſh throne,
So faithleſs, and ſo ruthleſs known,
Now hither comes; his end the ſame,
The ſame pretext of ſylvan game.
What grace for highland chiefs, judge ye,
By fate of Border chivalry.
Yet more; amid Glenfinlas green,
Douglas, thy ſtately form was ſeen.
This by eſpial ſure I know:
Your counſel in the ſtreight I ſhow."

XXIX.

Ellen and Margaret fearfully
Sought comfort in each other's eye,
Then turned their ghaſtly look, each one,
This to her ſire, that to her ſon.
The haſty colour went and came
In the bold cheek of Malcolm Græme;

But, from his glance it well appeared,
'Twas but for Ellen that he feared;
While ſorrowful, but undiſmay'd,
The Douglas thus his counſel ſaid:—
"Brave Roderick, though the tempeſt roar,
It may but thunder and paſs o'er;
Nor will I here remain an hour,
To draw the lightning on thy bower;
For well thou know'ſt, at this grey head
The royal bolt were fierceſt ſped.
For thee, who, at thy King's command,
Canſt aid him with a gallant band,
Submiſſion, homage, humbled pride,
Shall turn the monarch's wrath aſide.
Poor remnants of the Bleeding Heart,
Ellen and I will ſeek, apart,
The refuge of ſome foreſt cell;
There, like the hunted quarry, dwell,
Till, on the mountain and the moor,
The ſtern purſuit be paſſed and o'er."

XXX.

"No, by mine honour!" Roderick ſaid,
"So help me heaven, and my good blade!
No, never! Blaſted be yon pine,
My fathers' ancient creſt, and mine,

If from its ſhade in danger part
The lineage of the Bleeding Heart!
Hear my blunt ſpeech. Grant me this maid
To wife, thy counſel to mine aid;
To Douglas, leagued with Roderick Dhu,
Will friends and allies flock enow;
Like cauſe of doubt, diſtruſt, and grief,
Will bind to us each Weſtern Chief.
When the loud pipes my bridal tell,
The links of Forth ſhall hear the knell,
The guards ſhall ſtart in Stirling's porch,
And when I light the nuptial torch,
A thouſand villages in flames,
Shall ſcare the ſlumbers of King James.
—Nay, Ellen, blench not thus away,
And, mother, ceaſe theſe ſighs, I pray;
I meant not all my heat might ſay.
Small need of inroad, or of fight,
When the ſage Douglas may unite
Each mountain clan in friendly band,
To guard the paſſes of their land,
Till the foiled King, from pathleſs glen,
Shall bootleſs turn him home agen."

XXXI.

There are who have, at midnight hour,
In ſlumber ſcaled a dizzy tower,

And, on the verge that beetled o'er
The ocean-tide's inceſſant roar,
Dreamed calmly out their dangerous dream,
Till wakened by the morning beam;
When, dazzled by the eaſtern glow,
Such ſtartler caſt his glance below,
And ſaw unmeaſured depth around,
And heard unintermitted ſound,
And thought the battled fence ſo frail,
It waved like cobweb in the gale;
Amid his ſenſes' giddy wheel,
Did he not deſperate impulſe feel,
Headlong to plunge himſelf below,
And meet the worſt his fears foreſhow?
Thus, Ellen, dizzy and aſtound,
As ſudden ruin yawned around,
By croſſing terrors wildly toſſed,
Still for the Douglas fearing moſt,
Could ſcarce the deſperate thought withſtand,
To buy his ſafety with her hand.

XXXII.

Such purpoſe dread could Malcolm ſpy
In Ellen's quivering lip and eye,
And eager roſe to ſpeak—but ere
His tongue could hurry forth his fear,

Had Douglas marked the hectic ſtrife,
Where death ſeemed combating with life ;
For to her cheek, in feveriſh flood,
One inſtant ruſhed the throbbing blood,
Then ebbing back, with ſudden ſway,
Left its domain as wan as clay.
" Roderick, enough ! enough ! " he cried,
" My daughter cannot be thy bride ;
Not that the bluſh to wooer dear,
Nor paleneſs that of maiden fear.
It may not be—forgive her, chief,
Nor hazard aught for our relief.
Againſt his ſovereign, Douglas ne'er
Will level a rebellious ſpear.
'Twas I that taught his youthful hand
To rein a ſteed and wield a brand.
I ſee him yet, the princely boy !
Not Ellen more my pride and joy ;
I love him ſtill, deſpite my wrongs,
By haſty wrath and ſlanderous tongues.
Oh ſeek the grace you well may find,
Without a cauſe to mine combined."

XXXIII.

Twice through the hall the Chieftain ſtrode ;
The waving of his tartans broad,

And darkened brow, where wounded pride
With ire and diſappointment vied,
Seemed, by the torch's gloomy light,
Like the ill Demon of the night,
Stooping his pinions' ſhadowy ſway
Upon the nighted pilgrim's way :
But, unrequited Love ! thy dart
Plunged deepeſt its envenomed ſmart,
And Roderick, with thine anguiſh ſtung,
At length the hand of Douglas wrung,
While eyes, that mocked at tears before,
With bitter drops were running o'er.
The death-pangs of long cheriſhed hope
Scarce in that ample breaſt had ſcope,
But, ſtruggling with his ſpirit proud,
Convulſive heaved its chequered ſhroud,
While every ſob—ſo mute were all—
Was heard diſtinctly through the hall.
The ſon's deſpair, the mother's look,
Ill might the gentle Ellen brook ;
She roſe, and to her ſide there came,
To aid her parting ſteps, the Græme.

XXXIV.

Then Roderick from the Douglas broke—
As flaſhes flame through ſable ſmoke,

Kindling its wreaths, long, dark, and low,
To one broad blaze of ruddy glow,
So the deep anguiſh of deſpair
Burſt, in fierce jealouſy, to air.
With ſtalwart graſp his hand he laid
On Malcolm's breaſt and belted plaid :—
"Back, beardleſs boy!" he ſternly ſaid,
"Back, minion! hold'ſt thou thus at nought
The leſſon I ſo lately taught!
This roof, the Douglas, and that maid,
Thank thou for puniſhment delayed."
Eager as greyhound on his game,
Fiercely with Roderick grappled Græme.
"Periſh my name, if aught afford
Its chieftain ſafety, ſave his ſword!"
Thus as they ſtrove, their deſperate hand
Griped to the dagger or the brand,
And death had been—but Douglas roſe,
And thruſt between the ſtruggling foes
His giant ſtrength :—"Chieftains, forego!
I hold the firſt who ſtrikes, my foe.
Madmen, forbear your frantic jar!
What! is the Douglas fallen ſo far,
His daughter's hand is deemed the ſpoil
Of ſuch diſhonourable broil!"

Sullen and ſlowly, they unclaſp,
As ſtruck with ſhame, their deſperate graſp,
And each upon his rival glared,
With foot advanced, and blade half bared.

XXXV.

Ere yet the brands aloft were flung,
Margaret on Roderick's mantle hung,
And Malcolm heard his Ellen's ſcream,
As faltered through terrific dream.
Then Roderick plunged in ſheath his ſword,
And veiled his wrath in ſcornful word.
"Reſt ſafe till morning; pity 'twere
Such cheek ſhould feel the midnight air!
Then may'ſt thou to James Stuart tell,
Roderick will keep the lake and fell,
Nor lackey, with his free-born clan,
The pageant pomp of earthly man.
More would he of Clan-Alpine know,
Thou canſt our ſtrength and paſſes ſhow.
Maliſe, what ho?"—his henchman came;
"Give our ſafe conduct to the Græme."
Young Malcolm anſwered, calm and bold,
"Fear nothing for thy favourite hold.

The ſpot, an angel deigned to grace,
Is bleſſed, though robbers haunt the place ;
Thy churliſh courteſy for thoſe
Reſerve, who fear to be thy foes.
As ſafe to me the mountain way
At midnight, as in blaze of day,
Though, with his boldeſt at his back,
Even Roderick Dhu beſet the track.
Brave Douglas—lovely Ellen—nay,
Nought here of parting will I ſay.
Earth does not hold a loneſome glen,
So ſecret, but we meet agen.
Chieftain ! we too ſhall find an hour,"
He ſaid, and left the ſylvan bower.

XXXVI.

Old Allan followed to the ſtrand,
(Such was the Douglas's command,)
And anxious told, how, on the morn,
The ſtern Sir Roderick deep had ſworn,
The Fiery Croſs ſhould circle o'er
Dale, glen, and valley, down, and moor.
Much were the peril to the Græme,
From thoſe who to the ſignal came ;
Far up the lake 'twere ſafeſt land,
Himſelf would row him to the ſtrand.

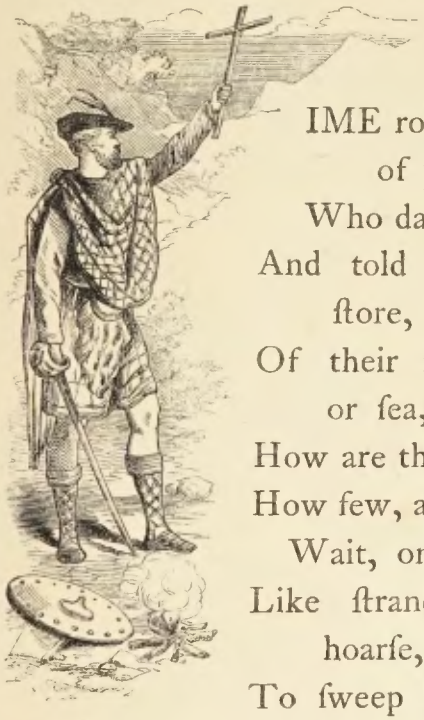
He gave his counſel to the wind,
While Malcolm did, unheeding, bind,
Round dirk and pouch and broad-ſword rolled,
His ample plaid in tightened fold,
And ſtripped his limbs to ſuch array
As beſt might ſuit the watery way.

XXXVII.

Then ſpoke abrupt:—"Farewell to thee,
Pattern of old fidelity!"
The minſtrel's hand he kindly preſſed,
"Oh! could I point a place of reſt!
My ſovereign holds in ward my land,
My uncle leads my vaſſal band;
To tame his foes, his friends to aid,
Poor Malcolm has but heart and blade.
Yet, if there be one faithful Græme,
Who loves the Chieftain of his name,
Not long ſhall honoured Douglas dwell,
Like hunted ſtag in mountain cell;
Nor, ere yon pride-ſwollen robber dare—
I may not give the reſt to air!—
Tell Roderick Dhu, I owed him nought,
Not the poor ſervice of a boat,
To waft me to yon mountain ſide;"
Then plunged he in the flaſhing tide.

Bold o'er the flood his head he bore,
And ſtoutly ſteered him from the ſhore ;
And Allan ſtrained his anxious eye,
Far 'mid the lake his form to ſpy.
Darkening acroſs each puny wave,
To which the moon her ſilver gave,
Faſt as the cormorant could ſkim,
The ſwimmer plied each active limb ;
Then landing in the moonlight dell,
Loud ſhouted of his weal to tell.
The Minſtrel heard the far halloo,
And joyful from the ſhore withdrew.

Canto Third.—The Gathering.



I.

TIME rolls his ceaſeleſs courſe. The race of yore
Who danced our infancy upon their knee,
And told our marvelling boyhood legends ſtore,
Of their ſtrange ventures happ'd by land or ſea,
How are they blotted from the things that be!
How few, all weak and withered of their force,
Wait, on the verge of dark eternity,
Like ſtranded wrecks, the tide returning hoarſe,
To ſweep them from our ſight! Time rolls his ceaſeleſs courſe.

Yet live there ſtill who can remember well,
How, when a mountain chief his bugle blew,
Both field and foreſt, dingle, cliff, and dell,
And ſolitary heath, the ſignal knew;

And faſt the faithful clan around him drew,
What time the warning note was keenly wound,
What time aloft their kindred banner flew,
While clamorous war-pipes yelled the gathering ſound,
And while the Fiery Croſs glanced, like a meteor, round.

II.

The ſummer dawn's reflected hue
To purple changed Loch-Katrine blue ;
Mildly and ſoft the weſtern breeze
Juſt kiſſed the lake, juſt ſtirred the trees,
And the pleaſed lake, like maiden coy,
Trembled but dimpled not for joy ;
The mountain ſhadows on her breaſt
Were neither broken nor at reſt ;
In bright uncertainty they lie,
Like future joys to Fancy's eye.
The water-lily to the light
Her chalice rear'd of ſilver bright ;
The doe awoke, and to the lawn,
Begemmed with dew-drops, led her fawn ;
The grey miſt left the mountain ſide,
The torrent ſhowed its gliſtening pride ;
Inviſible in flecked ſky,
The lark ſent down her revelry ;

The blackbird and the ſpeckled thruſh
Good-morrow gave from brake and buſh ;
In anſwer cooed the cuſhat dove,
Her notes of peace, and reſt, and love.

III.

No thought of peace, no thought of reſt,
Aſſuaged the ſtorm in Roderick's breaſt.
With ſheathed broad-ſword in his hand,
Abrupt he paced the iſlet ſtrand,
And eyed the riſing ſun, and laid
His hand on his impatient blade.
Beneath a rock, his vaſſals' care
Was prompt the ritual to prepare,
With deep and deathful meaning fraught ;
For ſuch Antiquity had taught
Was preface meet, ere yet abroad
The Croſs of Fire ſhould take its road.
The ſhrinking band ſtood oft aghaſt
At the impatient glance he caſt ;—
Such glance the mountain eagle threw,
As, from the cliffs of Ben-venue,
She ſpread her dark ſails on the wind,
And high in middle heaven reclined,
With her broad ſhadow on the lake,
Silenced the warblers of the brake.

IV.

A heap of withered boughs was piled,
Of juniper and rowan wild,
Mingled with ſhivers from the oak,
Rent by the lightning's recent ſtroke.
Brian the Hermit, by it ſtood,
Barefooted, in his frock and hood.
His griſled beard and matted hair
Obſcured a viſage of deſpair ;
His naked arms and legs, ſeamed o'er,
The ſcars of frantic penance bore.
That Monk, of ſavage form and face,
The impending danger of his race
Had drawn from deepeſt ſolitude,
Far in Benharrow's boſom rude.
Not his the mien of Chriſtian prieſt,
But Druid's, from the grave releaſed,
Whoſe hardened heart and eye might brook
On human ſacrifice to look.
And much, 'twas ſaid, of heathen lore
Mixed in the charms he muttered o'er ;
The hallowed creed gave only worſe
And deadlier emphaſis of curſe.
No peaſant ſought that Hermit's prayer,
His cave the pilgrim ſhunned with care ;

The eager huntſman knew his bound,
And in mid chaſe called off his hound ;
Or if, in lonely glen or ſtraith,
The deſert-dweller met his path,
He prayed, and ſigned the croſs between,
While terror took devotion's mien.

V.

Of Brian's birth ſtrange tales were told.
His mother watched a midnight fold,
Built deep within a dreary glen,
Where ſcattered lay the bones of men,
In ſome forgotten battle ſlain,
And bleached by drifting wind and rain.
It might have tamed a warrior's heart,
To view ſuch mockery of his art !
The knot-graſs fettered there the hand,
Which once could burſt an iron band ;
Beneath the broad and ample bone,
That bucklered heart to fear unknown,
A feeble and a timorous gueſt,
The field-fare framed her lowly neſt ;
There the ſlow blind-worm left his ſlime
On the fleet limbs that mocked at time ;
And there, too, lay the leader's ſkull,
Still wreathed with chaplet fluſhed and full,

For heath-bell, with her purple bloom,
Supplied the bonnet and the plume.
All night, in this ſad glen, the maid
Sate ſhrouded in her mantle's ſhade :
—She ſaid, no ſhepherd ſought her ſide,
No hunter's hand her ſnood untied,
Yet ne'er again to braid her hair,
The virgin ſnood did Alice wear ;
Gone was her maiden glee and ſport,
Her maiden girdle all too ſhort,
Nor ſought ſhe, from that fatal night,
Or holy church or bleſſed rite,
But locked her ſecret in her breaſt,
And died in travail, unconfeſſed.

VI.

Alone, among his young compeers,
Was Brian from his infant years ;
A moody and heart-broken boy,
Eſtranged from ſympathy and joy,
Bearing each taunt which careleſs tongue
On his myſterious lineage flung.
Whole nights he ſpent by moonlight pale,
To wood and ſtream his hap to wail.
Till, frantic, he as truth received
What of his birth the crowd believed,

And ſought, in miſt and meteor fire,
To meet and know his Phantom Sire!
In vain to ſoothe his wayward fate,
The cloiſter oped her pitying gate;
In vain the learning of the age
Unclaſped the ſable-lettered page;
Even in its treaſures he could find
Food for the fever of his mind.
Eager he read whatever tells
Of magic, cabala, and ſpells,
And every dark purſuit allied
To curious and preſumptuous pride,
Till, with fired brain and nerves o'erſtrung,
And heart with myſtic horrors wrung,
Deſperate he ſought Benharrow's den,
And hid him from the haunts of men.

VII.

The deſert gave him viſions wild,
Such as might ſuit the Spectre's child.
Where with black cliffs the torrents toil,
He watched the wheeling eddies boil,
Till, from their foam, his dazzled eyes
Beheld the river-demon riſe;
The mountain miſt took form and limb
Of noontide hag, or goblin grim;

The midnight wind came wild and dread,
Swelled with the voices of the dead;
Far on the future battle-heath
His eye beheld the ranks of death:
Thus the lone Seer, from mankind hurled,
Shaped forth a diſembodied world.
One lingering ſympathy of mind
Still bound him to the mortal kind;
The only parent he could claim
Of ancient Alpine's lineage came.
Late had he heard, in prophet's dream,
The fatal Ben-Shie's boding ſcream;
Sounds, too, had come, in midnight blaſt,
Of charging ſteeds, careering faſt
Along Benharrow's ſhingly ſide,
Where mortal horſeman ne'er might ride;
The thunderbolt had ſplit the pine—
All augur'd ill to Alpine's line.
He girt his loins, and came to ſhow
The ſignals of impending woe,
And now ſtood prompt to bleſs or ban,
As bade the Chieftain of his clan.

VIII.

'Twas all prepared—and from the rock,
A goat, the patriarch of the flock,

Before the kindling pile was laid,
And pierced by Roderick's ready blade.
Patient the ſickening victim eyed
The life-blood ebb in crimſon tide,
Down his clogged beard and ſhaggy limb,
Till darkneſs glazed his eyeballs dim.
The griſly prieſt, with murmuring prayer,
A ſlender croſſlet framed with care.
A cubit's length in meaſure due;
The ſhaft and limbs were rods of yew,
Whoſe parents in Inch-Cailliach wave
Their ſhadows o'er Clan-Alpine's grave,
And, anſwering Lomond's breezes deep,
Soothe many a chieftain's endleſs ſleep.
The Croſs, thus formed, he held on high,
With waſted hand and haggard eye,
And ſtrange and mingled feelings woke,
While his anathema he ſpoke.

IX.

"Woe to the clanſman, who ſhall view
This ſymbol of ſepulchral yew,
Forgetful that its branches grew
Where weep the heavens their holieſt dew
On Alpine's dwelling low!

Deſerter of his Chieftain's truſt,
He ne'er ſhall mingle with their duſt,
But, from his ſires and kindred thruſt,
Each clanſman's execration juſt
Shall doom him wrath and woe,"
He pauſed--the word the Vaſſals took,
With forward ſtep and fiery look,
On high their naked brands they ſhook,
Their clattering targets wildly ſtrook;
And firſt, in murmur low,
Then, like the billow in his courſe,
That far to ſeaward finds his ſource,
And flings to ſhore his muſtered force,
Burſt, with loud roar, their anſwer hoarſe,
"Woe to the traitor, woe!"
Ben-an's grey ſcalp the accents knew,
The joyous wolf from covert drew,
The exulting eagle ſcreamed afar—
They knew the voice of Alpine's war.

X.

The ſhout was huſhed on lake and fell,
The monk reſumed his muttered ſpell.
Diſmal and low its accents came,
The while he ſcathed the Croſs with flame;
And the few words that reached the air,
Although the holieſt name was there,

Had more of blaſphemy than prayer.
But when he ſhook above the crowd
Its kindled points, he ſpoke aloud :—
"Woe to the wretch, who fails to rear
At this dread ſign the ready ſpear !
For, as the flames this ſymbol ſear,
His home the refuge of his fear,
A kindred fate ſhall know ;
Far o'er its roof the volumed flame
Clan-Alpine's vengeance ſhall proclaim,
While maids and matrons on his name
Shall call down wretchedneſs and ſhame,
And infamy and woe !"
Then roſe the cry of females, ſhrill
As goſs-hawk's whiſtle on the hill,
Denouncing miſery and ill,
Mingled with childhood's babbling trill
Of curſes ſtammered ſlow ;
Anſwering, with imprecation dread,
"Sunk be his home in embers red !
And curſed be the meaneſt ſhed
That e'er ſhall hide the houſeleſs head
We doom to want and woe !"
A ſharp and ſhrieking echo gave,
Coir-Uriſkin, thy Goblin-cave !
And the grey paſs where birches wave,
On Beala-nam-bo.

XI.

Then deeper paufed the prieft anew,
And hard his labouring breath he drew,
While, with fet teeth and clenched hand,
And eyes that glowed like fiery brand,
He meditated curfe more dread,
And deadlier, on the clanfman's head,
Who, fummoned to his Chieftain's aid,
The fignal faw and difobeyed.
The crofflet's points of fparkling wood,
He quenched among the bubbling blood,
And as again the fign he reared,
Hollow and hoarfe his voice was heard :
"When flits this Crofs from man to man,
Vich-Alpine's fummons to his clan,
Burft be the ear that fails to heed !
Palfied the foot that fhuns to fpeed !
May ravens tear the carelefs eyes !
Wolves make the coward heart their prize.
As finks that blood-ftream in the earth,
So may his heart's-blood drench his hearth !
As dies in hiffing gore the fpark,
Quench thou his light, Deftruction dark !
And be the grace to him denied,
Bought by this fign to all befide !"

LANRICK MEAD.

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He ceaſed : no echo gave agen
The murmur of the deep Amen.

XII.

Then Roderick, with impatient look,
From Brian's hand the ſymbol took :
"Speed, Maliſe, ſpeed !" he said, and gave
The croſſlet to his henchman brave ;
"The muſter-place be Lanrick Mead—
Inſtant the time—ſpeed, Maliſe, ſpeed !"
Like heath-bird, when the hawks purſue,
A barge acroſs Loch-Katrine flew ;
High ſtood the henchman on the prow ;
So rapidly the barge-men row,
The bubbles, where they launched the boat,
Were all unbroken and afloat,
Dancing in foam and ripple ſtill,
When it had neared the mainland hill ;
And from the ſilver beech's ſide
Still was the prow three fathom wide,
When lightly bounded to the land
The meſſenger of blood and brand.

XIII.

Speed, Maliſe, ſpeed ! the dun deer's hide
On fleeter foot was never tied.

Speed, Malife, ſpeed ! ſuch cauſe of haſte
Thine active ſinews never braced.
Bend 'gainſt the ſteepy hill thy breast,
Burſt down like torrent from its creſt ;
With ſhort and ſpringing footſtep paſs
The trembling bog and falſe moraſs ;
Acroſs the brook like roebuck bound,
And thread the brake like queſting hound ;
The crag is high, the ſcaur is deep,
Yet ſhrink not from the deſperate leap ;
Parched are thy burning lips and brow,
Yet by the fountain pauſe not now ;
Herald of battle, fate, and fear,
Stretch onward in thy fleet career !
The wounded hind thou track'ſt not now,
Purſueſt not maid through greenwood bough,
Nor plyeſt thou now thy flying pace
With rivals in the mountain race ;
But danger, death, and warrior deed
Are in thy courſe—Speed, Malife, ſpeed !

XIV.

Faſt as the fatal ſymbol flies,
In arms the huts and hamlets riſe ;
From winding glen, from upland brown,
They poured each hardy tenant down.

Nor ſlacked the meſſenger his pace ;
He ſhowed the ſign, he named the place,
And, preſſing forward like the wind,
Leſt clamour and ſurpriſe behind.
The fiſherman forſook the ſtrand,
The ſwarthy ſmith took dirk and brand ;
With changed cheer, the mower blythe,
Left in the half-cut ſwathe his ſcythe ;
The herds without a keeper ſtrayed,
The plough was in mid-furrow ſtaid,
The falc'ner toſſed his hawk away,
The hunter left the ſtag at bay :
Prompt at the ſignal of alarms,
Each ſon of Alpine ruſhed to arms ;
So ſwept the tumult and affray
Along the margin of Achray.
Alas, thou lovely lake ; that e'er
Thy banks ſhould echo ſounds of fear !
The rocks, the boſky thickets, ſleep
So ſtilly on thy boſom deep,
The lark's blythe carol from the cloud,
Seems for the ſcene too gaily loud.

XV.

Speed, Maliſe, ſpeed ! the lake is paſt,
Duncraggan's huts appear at laſt,

And peep, like moſs-grown rocks, half ſeen,
Half-hidden in the copſe, ſo green ;
There may'ſt thou reſt, thy labour done,
Their Lord ſhall ſpeed the ſignal on.
As ſtoops the hawk upon his prey,
The henchman ſhot him down the way.
—What woful accents load the gale ?
The funeral yell, the female wail !
A gallant hunter's ſport is o'er,
A valiant warrior fights no more.
Who, in the battle or the chaſe,
At Roderick's ſide ſhall fill his place !—
Within the hall, where torch's ray
Supplies the excluded beams of day,
Lies Duncan on his lowly bier,
And o'er him ſtreams his widow's tear.
His ſtripling ſon ſtands mournful by,
His youngeſt weeps, but knows not why ;
The village maids and matrons round
The diſmal coronach reſound.

XVI.

Coronach.

He is gone on the mountain,
He is loſt to the foreſt,
Like a ſummer-dried fountain,
When our need was the foreſt

The font, re-appearing,
From the rain-drops ſhall borrow,
But to us comes no cheering,
To Duncan no morrow!

The hand of the reaper
Takes the ears that are hoary,
But the voice of the weeper
Wails manhood in glory;
The autumn winds ruſhing
Waft the leaves that are ſeareſt,
But our flower was in fluſhing,
When blighting was neareſt.

Fleet foot on the correi,
Sage counſel in cumber,
Red hand in the foray,
How ſound is thy ſlumber!
Like the dew on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
Thou art gone, and for ever!

XVII.

See Stumah, who, the bier beſide,
His maſter's corpſe with wonder eyed—
Poor Stumah! whom his leaſt halloo
Could ſend like lightning o'er the dew,
Briſtles his creſt, and points his ears,
As if ſome ſtranger ſtep he hears.
'Tis not a mourner's muffled tread,
Who comes to ſorrow o'er the dead,

But headlong haſte, or deadly fear,
Urge the precipitate career.
All ſtand aghaſt :—unheeding all,
The henchman burſts into the hall !
Before the dead man's bier he ſtood,
Held forth the Croſs beſmeared with blood !
"The muſter-place is Lanrick Mead ;
Speed forth the ſignal ! clanſmen, ſpeed !"

XVIII.

Angus, the heir of Duncan's line,
Sprang forth and ſeized the fatal ſign.
In haſte the ſtripling to his ſide
His father's dirk and broad-ſword tied ;
But when he ſaw his mother's eye
Watch him in ſpeechleſs agony,
Back to her opened arms he flew,
Preſſed on her lips a fond adieu.
"Alas" ſhe ſobbed—"and yet be gone,
And ſpeed thee forth, like Duncan's ſon !"
One look he caſt upon the bier,
Daſhed from his eye the gathering tear,
Breathed deep, to clear his labouring breaſt,
And toſſ'd aloft his bonnet creſt,
Then, like the high-bred colt when freed
Firſt he eſſays his fire and ſpeed,

He vaniſhed, and o'er moor and moſs
Sped forward with the Fiery Croſs.
Suſpended was the widow's tear,
While yet his footſteps ſhe could hear;
And when ſhe marked the henchman's eye
Wet with unwonted ſympathy,
"Kinſman," ſhe ſaid, "his race is run,
That ſhould have ſped thine errand on;
The oak has fallen—the ſapling bough
Is all Duncraggan's ſhelter now.
Yet truſt I well, his duty done,
The orphan's God will guard my ſon.
And you, in many a danger true,
At Duncan's heſt your blades that drew,
To arms, and guard that orphan's head!
Let babes and women wail the dead."
Then weapon-clang, and martial call,
Reſounded through the funeral hall,
While from the walls the attendant band
Snatched ſword and targe, with hurried hand;
And ſhort and flitting energy
Glanced from the mourner's ſunken eye,
As if the ſounds to warrior dear
Might rouſe her Duncan from his bier.
But faded ſoon that borrowed force;
Grief claimed his right, and tears their courſe.

XIX.

Benledi ſaw the Croſs of Fire,
It glanced like lightning up Strath-Ire.
O'er dale and hill the ſummons flew,
Nor reſt nor pauſe young Angus knew ;
The tear that gathered in his eye,
He left the mountain breeze to dry ;
Until, where Teith's young waters roll,
Betwixt him and a wooded knoll,
That graced the ſable ſtrath with green,
The chapel of Saint Bride was ſeen.
Swoln was the ſtream, remote the bridge,
But Angus pauſed not on the edge ;
Though the dark waves danced dizzily,
Though reeled his ſympathetic eye,
He daſhed amid the torrent's roar ;
His right hand high the croſslet bore,
His left the pole-axe graſped, to guide
And ſtay his footing in the tide.
He ſtumbled twice—the foam ſplaſhed high,
With hoarſer ſwell the ſtream raced by ;
And had he fallen—for ever there,
Farewell Duncraggan's orphan heir !
But ſtill as if in parting life,
Firmer he graſped the Croſs of ſtrife,

NEAR THE CHAPEL OF ST. BRIDE.

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Until the oppoſing bank he gained,
And up the chapel pathway ſtrained.

XX.

A blytheſome rout, that morning tide,
Had ſought the chapel of Saint Bride.
Her troth Tombea's Mary gave
To Norman, heir of Armandave,
And, iſſuing from the Gothic arch,
The bridal now reſumed their march.
In rude, but glad proceſſion, came
Bonneted ſire and coif-clad dame ;
And plaided youth, with jeſt and jeer,
Which ſnooded maiden would not hear ;
And children, that, unwitting why,
Lent the gay ſhout their ſhrilly cry ;
And minſtrels, that in meaſures vied
Before the young and bonny bride,
Whoſe downcaſt eye and cheek diſcloſe
The tear and bluſh of morning roſe.
With virgin ſtep, and baſhful hand,
She held the kerchief's ſnowy band ;
The gallant bridegroom, by her ſide,
Beheld his prize with victor's pride,
And the glad mother in her ear
Was cloſely whiſpering word of cheer.

XXI.

Who meets them at the church-yard gate?
The meſſenger of fear and fate!
Haſte in his hurried accent lies,
And grief is ſwimming in his eyes.
All dripping from the recent flood,
Panting and travel-ſoiled he ſtood,
The fatal ſign of fire and ſword
Held forth, and ſpoke the appointed word:
"The muſter-place is Lanrick Mead;
Speed forth the ſignal! Norman, ſpeed!"
And muſt he change ſo ſoon the hand,
Juſt linked to his by holy band,
For the fell croſs of blood and brand?
And muſt the day, ſo blythe that roſe,
And promiſed rapture in the cloſe,
Before its ſetting hour, divide
The bridegroom from the plighted bride?
Oh fatal doom!—it muſt! it muſt!
Clan-Alpine's cauſe, her Chieftain's truſt,
Her ſummons dread, brooks no delay;
Stretch to the race—away! away!

XXII.

Yet ſlow he laid his plaid aſide,
And, lingering, eyed his lovely bride,
Until he ſaw the ſtarting tear
Speak woe he might not ſtop to cheer;
Then, truſting not a ſecond look,
In haſte he ſped him up the brook,
Nor backward glanced, till on the heath
Where Lubnaig's lake ſupplies the Teith.
What in the racer's boſom ſtirred?
The ſickening pang of hope deferred,
And memory, with a torturing train
Of all his morning viſions vain.
Mingled with love's impatience, came
The manly thirſt for martial fame;
The ſtormy joy of mountaineers,
Ere yet they ruſh upon the ſpears;
And zeal for clan and chieftain burning,
And hope, from well-fought field returning,
With war's red honours on his creſt,
To claſp his Mary to his breaſt.
Stung by ſuch thoughts, o'er bank and brae,
Like fire from flint he glanced away,
While high reſolve, and feeling ſtrong,
Burſt into voluntary ſong.

XXIII.

Song.

The heath this night muſt be my bed,
The bracken curtain for my head,
My lullaby the warder's tread,
  Far, far from love and thee, Mary;
To-morrow eve, more ſtilly laid,
My couch may be my bloody plaid,
My veſper ſong, thy wail, ſweet maid!
  It will not waken me, Mary!

I may not, dare not, fancy now
The grief that clouds thy lovely brow,
I dare not think upon thy vow,
  And all it promiſed me, Mary.
No fond regret muſt Norman know;
When burſts Clan-Alpine on the foe,
His heart muſt be like bended bow,
  His foot like arrow free, Mary.

A time will come with feeling fraught!
For, if I fall in battle fought,
Thy haplefs lover's dying thought
  Shall be a thought on thee, Mary!
And if returned from conquered foes,
How blithely will the evening cloſe,
How ſweet the linnet ſing repoſe
  To my young bride and me, Mary!

XXIV.

Not faſter o'er thy heathery braes,
Balquidder, ſpeeds the midnight blaze,

Rufhing, in conflagration ftrong,
Thy deep ravines and dells along,
Wrapping thy cliffs in purple glow,
And reddening the dark lakes below ;
Nor fafter fpeeds it, nor fo far,
As o'er thy heaths the voice of war.
The fignal roufed to martial coil
The fullen margin of Loch-Voil,
Waked ftill Loch-Doine, and to the fource
Alarmed, Balvaig, thy fwampy courfe ;
Thence fouthward turned its rapid road
Adown Strath-Gartney's valley broad,
Till rofe in arms each man might claim
A portion in Clan-Alpine's name ;
From the grey fire, whofe trembling hand
Could hardly buckle on his brand,
To the raw boy, whofe fhaft and bow
Were yet fcarce terror to the crow.
Each valley, each fequeftered glen,
Muftered its little horde of men,
That met as torrents from the height,
In Highland dale their ftreams unite,
Still gathering, as they pour along,
A voice more loud, a tide more ftrong,
Till at the rendezvous they ftood
By hundreds prompt for blows and blood ;

Each trained to arms ſince life began,
Owning no tie but to his clan,
No oath, but by his Chieftain's hand,
No law, but Roderick Dhu's command.

XXV.

That ſummer morn had Roderick Dhu
Surveyed the ſkirts of Ben-venue,
And ſent his ſcouts o'er hill and heath,
To view the frontiers of Menteith.
All backward came with news of truce ;
Still lay each martial Græme and Bruce,
In Rednock courts no horſemen wait,
No banner waved on Cardroſs gate,
On Duchray's towers no beacon ſhone,
Nor ſcared the herons from Loch-Con ;
All ſeemed at peace. Now, wot ye why
The Chieftain, with ſuch anxious eye,
Ere to the muſter he repair,
This weſtern frontier ſcann'd with care ?—
In Ben-venue's moſt darkſome cleft,
A fair, though cruel pledge was left ;
For Douglas, to his promiſe true,
That morning from the iſle withdrew,
And in a deep ſequeſtered dell
Had ſought a low and lonely cell.

By many a bard in Celtic tongue,
Has Coir-nan-Uriſkin been ſung ;
A ſofter name the Saxons gave,
And called the grot the Goblin-cave.

XXVI.

It was a wild and ſtrange retreat,
As e'er was trod by outlaw's feet.
The dell, upon the mountain's creſt,
Yawned like a gaſh on warrior's breaſt ;
Its trench had ſtayed full many a rock,
Hurled by primeval earthquake ſhock
From Ben-venue's grey ſummit wild,
And here, in random ruin piled,
They frowned incumbent o'er the ſpot,
And formed the rugged ſylvan grot.
The oak and birch, with mingled ſhade,
At noontide there a twilight made,
Unleſs when ſhort and ſudden ſhone
Some ſtraggling beam on cliff or ſtone,
With ſuch a glimpſe as prophet's eye
Gains on thy depth, Futurity.
No murmur waked the ſolemn ſtill,
Save tinkling of a fountain rill ;
But when the wind chafed with the lake,
A ſullen ſound would upward break,

With daſhing hollow voice, that ſpoke
The inceſſant war of wave and rock.
Suſpended cliffs, with hideous ſway,
Seemed nodding o'er the cavern grey.
From ſuch a den the wolf had ſprung,
In ſuch the wild cat leaves her young;
Yet Douglas and his daughter fair,
Sought, for a ſpace, their ſafety there.
Grey Superſtition's whiſper dread
Debarred the ſpot to vulgar tread;
For there, ſhe ſaid, did fays reſort,
And ſatyrs hold their ſylvan court,
By moonlight tread their myſtic maze,
And blaſt the raſh beholder's gaze.

XXVII.

Now eve, with weſtern ſhadows long,
Floated on Katrine bright and ſtrong,
When Roderick, with a choſen few,
Repaſſed the heights of Ben-venue.
Above the Goblin-cave they go,
Through the wild paſs of Beal-nam-bo;
The prompt retainers ſpeed before,
To launch the ſhallop from the ſhore,
For croſs Loch-Katrine lies his way
To view the paſſes of Achray,

BEAL-NAM-BO; THE PASS OF THE CATTLE.

p. 100.

And place his clanſmen in array.
Yet lags the Chief in muſing mind,
Unwonted ſight, his men behind.
A ſingle page, to bear his ſword,
Alone attended on his lord ;
The reſt their way through thickets break,
And ſoon await him by the lake.
It was a fair and gallant ſight,
To view them from the neighbouring height,
By the low-levelled ſunbeam's light ;
For ſtrength and ſtature, from the clan
Each warrior was a choſen man,
As even afar might well be ſeen,
By their proud ſtep and martial mien.
Their feathers dance, their tartans float,
Their targets gleam, as by the boat
A wild and warlike group they ſtand,
That well became ſuch mountain ſtrand.

XXVIII.

Their Chief, with ſtep reluctant, ſtill
Was lingering on the craggy hill,
Hard by where turned apart the road
To Douglas's obſcure abode.
It was but with that dawning morn
That Roderick Dhu had proudly ſworn,

To drown his love in war's wild roar,
Nor think of Ellen Douglas more;
But he who ſtems a ſtream with ſand,
And fetters flame with flaxen band,
Has yet a harder taſk to prove—
By firm reſolve to conquer love!
Eve finds the Chief, like reſtleſs ghoſt,
Still hovering near his treaſure loſt;
For though his haughty heart deny
A parting meeting to his eye,
Still fondly ſtrains his anxious ear
The accents of her voice to hear,
And inly did he curſe the breeze
That waked to ſound the ruſtling trees.
But, hark! what mingles in the ſtrain?
It is the harp of Allan-Bane,
That wakes its meaſures ſlow and high,
Attuned to ſacred minſtrelſy.
What melting voice attends the ſtrings?
'Tis Ellen, or an angel, ſings!

XXIX.

Hymn to the Virgin.

Ave Maria! Maiden mild!
Liſten to a maiden's prayer;
Thou canſt hear though from the wild,
Thou canſt ſave amid deſpair.

Safe may we ſleep beneath thy care,
Though baniſhed, outcaſt, and reviled—
Maiden, hear a maiden's prayer!
Mother, hear a ſuppliant child!
Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! undefiled!
The flinty couch we now muſt ſhare,
Shall ſeem with down of eider piled,
If thy protection hover there.
The murky cavern's heavy air
Shall breathe of balm if thou haſt ſmiled;
Then Maiden, hear a maiden's prayer!
Mother, lift a ſuppliant child!
Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! Stainleſs ſtyled!
Foul demons of the earth and air,
From this their wonted haunt exiled,
Shall flee before thy preſence fair.
We bow us to our lot of care,
Beneath thy guidance reconciled;
Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer
And for a father hear a child!
Ave Maria!

XXX.

Died on the harp the cloſing hymn—
Unmoved in attitude and limb,
As liſtening ſtill, Clan-Alpine's lord
Stood leaning on his heavy ſword,
Until the page with humble ſign,
Twice pointed to the ſun's decline.

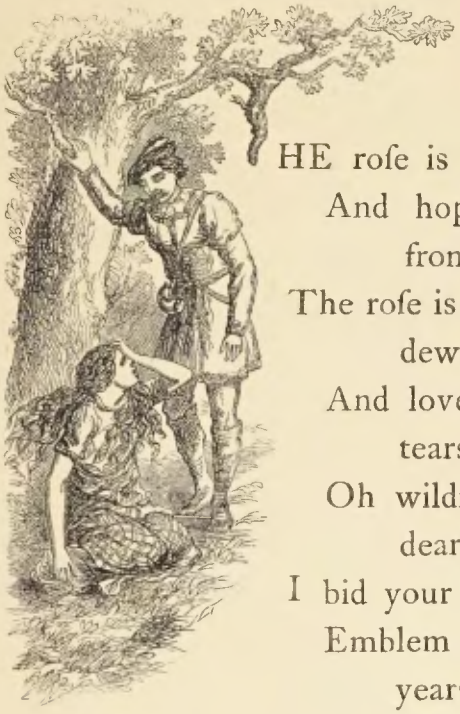
Then, while his plaid he round him caſt,
"It is the laſt time—'tis the laſt"—
He muttered thrice—"the laſt time e'er
That angel-voice ſhall Roderick hear!"
It was a goading thought—his ſtride
Hied haſtier down the mountain ſide;
Sullen he flung him in the boat,
And inſtant croſs the lake it ſhot.
They landed in that ſilvery bay,
And eaſtward held their haſty way,
Till, with the lateſt beams of light,
The band arrived on Lanrick height,
Where muſtered in the vale below,
Clan-Alpine's men in martial ſhow.

XXXI.

A various ſcene the clanſmen made,
Some ſate, ſome ſtood, ſome ſlowly ſtrayed;
But moſt, with mantles folded round,
Were couched to reſt upon the ground,
Scarce to be known by curious eye,
From the deep heather where they lie,
So well was matched the tartan ſcreen
With heath-bell dark and brackens green;
Unleſs where, here and there, a blade,
Or lance's point a glimmer made,

Like glow-worm twinkling through the ſhade.
But, when, advancing through the gloom,
They ſaw the Chieftain's eagle plume,
Their ſhout of welcome, ſhrill and wide,
Shook the ſteep mountain's ſteady ſide.
Thrice it aroſe, and lake and fell
Three times returned the martial yell.
It died upon Bochaſtle's plain,
And Silence claimed her evening reign.

Canto Fourth.—The Prophecy.



I.

HE rofe is faireft when 'tis budding new,
And hope is brighteft when it dawns from fears ;
The rofe is fweeteft wafhed with morning dew,
And love is lovelieft when embalmed in tears.
Oh wilding rofe, whom fancy thus endears,
I bid your bloffoms in my bonnet wave,
Emblem of hope and love through future years !"
Thus fpoke young Norman, heir of Armandave,
What time the fun arofe on Vennachar's broad wave.

II.

Such fond conceit, half faid, half fung,
Love prompted to the bridegroom's tongue.

All while he ſtripped the wild-roſe ſpray,
His axe and bow beſide him lay,
For on a paſs 'twixt lake and wood,
A wakeful ſentinel he ſtood.
Hark !—on the rock a footſtep rung,
And inſtant to his arms he ſprung.
"Stand, or thou dieſt !—What, Maliſe ?—ſoon
Art thou returned from Braes of Doune.
By thy keen ſtep and glance I know,
Thou bring'ſt us tidings of the foe."
(For while the Fiery Croſs hied on,
On diſtant ſcout had Maliſe gone.)
"Where ſleeps the Chief ?" the henchman ſaid.
"Apart, in yonder miſty glade ;
To his lone couch I'll be your guide."
Then called a ſlumberer by his ſide,
And ſtirred him with his ſlackened bow—
"Up, up, Glentarkin ! rouſe thee, ho !
We ſeek the Chieftain ; on the track,
Keep eagle watch till I come back."

III.

Together up the paſs they ſped :
"What of the foeman ?" Norman ſaid.
"Varying reports from near and far ;
This certain—that a band of war

Has for two days been ready boune,
At prompt command to march from Doune ;
King James, the while, with princely powers,
Holds revelry in Stirling towers.
Soon will this dark and gathering cloud
Speak on our glens in thunder loud.
Inured to bide ſuch bitter bout,
The warrior's plaid may bear it out ;
But, Norman, how wilt thou provide
A ſhelter for thy bonnie bride ? "
" What ! know ye not that Roderick's care
To the lone iſle hath cauſed repair
Each maid and matron of the clan,
And every child and aged man
Unfit for arms ? and given his charge,
Nor ſkiff nor ſhallop, boat nor barge,
Upon theſe lakes ſhall float at large,
But all beſide the iſlet moor,
That ſuch dear pledge may reſt ſecure ? "

IV.

" 'Tis well adviſed—the Chieftain's plan
Beſpeaks the father of his clan.
But wherefore ſleeps Sir Roderick Dhu
Apart from all his followers true ? "
" It is, becauſe laſt evening-tide
Brian an augury hath tried,

Of that dread kind which muſt not be
Unleſs in dread extremity,
The Taghairm called ; by which, afar,
Our ſires foreſaw the events of war.
Duncraggan's milk-white bull they ſlew——"

MALISE.

"Ah ! well the gallant brute I knew,
The choiceſt of the prey we had,
When ſwept our merry-men Gallangad.
His hide was ſnow, his horns were dark,
His red eye glowed like fiery ſpark ;
So fierce, ſo tameleſs, and ſo fleet,
Sore did he cumber our retreat,
And kept our ſtouteſt kernes in awe,
Even at the paſs of Beal 'maha.
But ſteep and flinty was the road,
And ſharp the hurrying pikeman's goad,
And when we came to Dennan's Row,
A child might ſcatheleſs ſtroke his brow."

V.

NORMAN.

"That bull was ſlain ; his reeking hide
They ſtretched the cataract beſide,
Whoſe waters their wild tumult toſs
Adown the black and craggy boſs

TORRENT BY THE HERO'S TARGE.

p. 111.

Of that huge cliff, whoſe ample verge
Tradition calls the Hero's Targe.
Couched on a ſhelve beneath its brink,
Cloſe where the thundering torrents ſink,
Rocking beneath their headlong ſway,
And drizzled by the ceaſeleſs ſpray,
Midſt groan of rock, and roar of ſtream,
The wizard waits prophetic dream.
Nor diſtant reſts the Chief :—but huſh !
See, gliding ſlow through miſt and buſh,
The Hermit gains yon rock, and ſtands
To gaze upon our ſlumbering bands.
Seems he not, Maliſe, like a ghoſt,
That hovers o'er a ſlaughtered hoſt ?
Or raven on the blaſted oak,
That, watching while the deer is broke,
His morſel claims with ſullen croak ?"

MALISE.

"Peace ! peace ! to other than to me,
Thy words were evil augury ;
But ſtill I hold Sir Roderick's blade
Clan-Alpine's omen and her aid,
Not aught that, gleaned from heaven or hell,
Yon fiend-begotten monk can tell.
The Chieftain joins him, ſee—and now,
Together they deſcend the brow."

VI.

And as they came, with Alpine's Lord
The Hermit Monk held ſolemn word :
" Roderick ! it is a fearful ſtrife,
For man endowed with mortal life,
Whoſe ſhroud of ſentient clay can ſtill
Feel feveriſh pang and fainting chill,
Whoſe eye can ſtare in ſtony trance,
Whoſe hair can rouſe like warrior's lance—
' Tis hard for ſuch to view unfurl'd,
The curtain of the future world.
Yet witneſs every quaking limb,
My ſunken pulſe, mine eyeballs dim,
My ſoul with harrowing anguiſh torn,
This for my Chieftain have I borne !
The ſhapes that ſought my fearful couch,
An human tongue may ne'er avouch ;
No mortal man—ſave he, who, bred
Between the living and the dead,
Is gifted beyond nature's law,
Had e'er ſurvived to ſay he ſaw.
At length the fateful anſwer came,
In characters of living flame !
Not ſpoke in word, nor blazed in ſcroll
But borne and branded on my ſoul ;—

WHICH SPILLS THE FOREMOST FOEMAN'S LIFE,
THAT PARTY CONQUERS IN THE STRIFE."

VII.

"Thanks, Brian, for thy zeal and care!
Good is thine augury, and fair.
Clan-Alpine ne'er in battle ſtood,
But firſt our broad-ſwords taſted blood.
A ſurer victim ſtill I know,
Self-offered to the auſpicious blow:
A ſpy hath ſought my land this morn,
No eve ſhall witneſs his return!
My followers guard each paſs's mouth,
To eaſt, to weſtward, and to ſouth;
Red Murdoch, bribed to be his guide,
Has charge to lead his ſteps aſide,
Till, in deep path or dingle brown,
He light on thoſe ſhall bring him down.
But ſee, who comes his news to ſhow!
Maliſe! what tidings of the foe?"

VIII.

"At Doune, o'er many a ſpear and glaive,
Two Barons proud their banners wave.
I ſaw the Moray's ſilver ſtar,
And marked the ſable pale of Mar."

"By Alpine's ſoul, high tidings thoſe !
I love to hear of worthy foes.
When move they on ?" "To-morrow's noon
Will ſee them here for battle boune."
"Then ſhall it ſee a meeting ſtern !—
But, for the place—ſay, couldſt thou learn
Nought of the friendly clans of Earn ?
Strengthened by them we well might bide
The battle on Benledi's ſide.
Thou couldſt not ?—well ! Clan-Alpine's men
Shall man the Troſachs' ſhaggy glen ;
Within Loch-Katrine's gorge we'll fight,
All in our maids' and matrons' ſight,
Each for his hearth and houſehold fire,
Father for child, and ſon for ſire—
Lover for maid beloved !—but why—
Is it the breeze affects mine eye ?
Or doſt thou come, ill-omen'd tear !
A meſſenger of doubt or fear ?
No ! ſooner may the Saxon lance
Unfix Benledi from his ſtance,
Than doubt or terror can pierce through
The unyielding heart of Roderick Dhu ;
'Tis ſtubborn as his truſty targe.
Each to his poſt !—all know their charge."
The pibroch ſounds, the bands advance,
The broad-ſwords gleam, the banners dance,

Obedient to the Chieftain's glance
I turn me from the martial roar,
And ſeek Coir-Uriſkin once more.

IX.

Where is the Douglas ?—he is gone ;
And Ellen ſits on the grey ſtone
Faſt by the cave, and makes her moan ;
While vainly Allan's words of cheer
Are poured on her unheeding ear.
"He will return—dear lady, truſt !—
With joy return ; he will—he muſt !
Well was it time to ſeek afar
Some refuge from impending war,
When e'en Clan-Alpine's rugged ſwarm
Are cow'd by the approaching ſtorm.
I ſaw their boats, with many a light,
Floating the live-long yeſternight,
Shifting like flaſhes darted forth
By the red ſtreamers of the north ;
I marked at morn how cloſe they ride,
Thick moored by the lone iſlet's ſide,
Like wild ducks couching in the fen,
When ſtoops the hawk upon the glen.
Since this rude race dare not abide
The peril on the mainland ſide,

Shall not thy noble father's care
Some ſafe retreat for thee prepare?"

X.

ELLEN.

"No, Allan, no! Pretext ſo kind
My wakeful terrors could not blind.
When in ſuch tender tone, yet grave,
Douglas a parting bleſſing gave,
The tear that gliſtened in his eye
Drowned not his purpoſe fixed and high.
My ſoul, though feminine and weak,
Can image his; e'en as the lake,
Itſelf diſturbed by ſlighteſt ſtroke,
Reflects the invulnerable rock.
He hears reports of battle rife,
He deems himſelf the cauſe of ſtrife.
I ſaw him redden, when the theme
Turned, Allan, on thine idle dream,
Of Malcolm Græme in fetters bound,
Which I, thou ſaid'ſt, about him wound.
Think'ſt thou he trow'd thine omen aught?
Oh no! 'twas apprehenſive thought
For the kind youth—for Roderick too—
(Let me be juſt) that friend ſo true;

In danger both, and in our cauſe !
Minſtrel, the Douglas dare not pauſe.
Why elſe that ſolemn warning given,
'If not on earth, we meet in heaven ?'
Why elſe, to Cambus-kenneth's fane,
If eve return him not again,
Am I to hie and make me known !
Alas ! he goes to Scotland's throne,
Buys his friend's ſafety with his own ;
He goes to do—what I had done,
Had Douglas' daughter been his ſon !"

XI.

"Nay, lovely Ellen !—deareſt, nay !
If aught ſhould his return delay
He only named yon holy fane
As fitting place to meet again.
Be ſure he's ſafe ; and for the Græme,
Heaven's bleſſing on his gallant name !
My viſioned ſight may yet prove true,
Nor bode of ill to him or you.
When did my gifted dream beguile ?
Think of the ſtranger at the iſle,
And think upon the harpings ſlow,
That preſaged this approaching woe !

Sooth was my prophecy of fear ;
Believe it when it augurs cheer.
Would we had left this diſmal ſpot !
Ill luck ſtill haunts a fairy grot.
Of ſuch a wondrous tale I know—
Dear lady, change that look of woe !
My heart was wont thy grief to cheer——"

ELLEN.

"Well, be it as thou wilt ; I hear,
But cannot ſtop the burſting tear."
The Minſtrel tried his ſimple art,
But diſtant far was Ellen's heart.

XII.

Ballad.

ALICE BRAND.

Merry it is in the good green wood,
When the mavis and merle are ſinging,
When the deer ſweeps by, and the hounds are in cry,
And the hunter's horn is ringing.

"Oh Alice Brand ! my native land
Is loſt for love of you ;
And we muſt hold by wood and wold,
As outlaws wont to do.

"Oh Alice ! 'twas all for thy locks ſo bright,
And 'twas all for thine eyes ſo blue,
That on the night of our luckleſs flight,
Thy brother bold I ſlew.

"Now muſt I teach to hew the beech,
The hand that held the glaive,
For leaves to ſpread our lowly bed,
And ſtakes to fence our cave.

"And for veſt of pall, thy fingers ſmall,
That wont on harp to ſtray,
A cloak muſt ſhear from the ſlaughtered deer
To keep the cold away."

"Oh Richard! if my brother died,
'Twas but a fatal chance;
For darkling was the battle tried,
And Fortune ſped the lance.

"If pall and vair no more I wear,
Nor thou the crimſon ſheen,
As warm, we'll ſay, is the ruſſet grey,
As gay the foreſt-green.

"And, Richard, if our lot be hard,
And loſt thy native land,
Still Alice has her own Richard,
And he his Alice Brand."

XIII.

Ballad continued.

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good green wood,
So blythe Lady Alice is ſinging;
On the beech's pride, and the oak's brown ſide,
Lord Richard's axe is ringing.

Up ſpoke the moody Elfin King,
Who won'd within the hill—
Like wind in the porch of a ruined church,
His voice was ghoſtly ſhrill.

"Why ſounds yon ſtroke on beech and oak,
Our moonlight circle's ſcreen?
Or who comes here to chaſe the deer,
Beloved of our Elfin Queen?
Or who may dare on wold to wear
The fairy's fatal green?

"Up, Urgan, up! to yon mortal hie,
For thou wert chriſtened man;
For croſs or ſign thou wilt not fly,
For muttered word or ban.

"Lay on him the curſe of the withered heart,
The curse of the ſleepleſs eye;
Till he wiſh and pray that his life would part,
Nor yet find leave to die."

XIV.

Ballad continued.

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good green wood,
Though the birds have ſtilled their ſinging;
The evening blaze doth Alice raiſe,
And Richard is fagots bringing.

Up Urgan ſtarts, that hideous dwarf,
Before Lord Richard ſtands,
And, as he croſſed and bleſſed himſelf,
"I fear not ſign," quoth the griſly elf,
"That is made with bloody hands."

But out then ſpoke ſhe, Alice Brand,
That woman void of fear—
"And if there's blood upon his hand,
'Tis but the blood of deer."

"Now loud thou lieſt, thou bold of mood!
It cleaves unto his hand,
The ſtain of thine own kindly blood,
The blood of Ethert Brand."

Then forward ſtepp'd ſhe, Alice Brand,
And made the holy ſign—
"And if there's blood on Richard's hand,
A ſpotleſs hand is mine.

"And I conjure thee, Demon elf,
By Him whom Demons fear,
To ſhow us whence thou art thyſelf?
And what thine errand here?

XV.

Ballad continued.

"'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in Fairy land,
When fairy birds are ſinging,
When the court doth ride by their monarch's ſide,
With bit and bridle ringing:

"And gaily ſhines the Fairy land—
But all is gliſtening ſhow,
Like the idle gleam that December's beam
Can dart on ice and ſnow.

"And fading, like that varied gleam,
Is our inconſtant ſhape,
Who now like knight and lady ſeem,
And now like dwarf and ape.

"It was between the night and day,
When the Fairy King has power,
That I ſank down in a ſinful fray,
And, 'twixt life and death, was ſnatched away
To the joyleſs Elfin bower.

"But wiſt I of a woman bold,
Who thrice my brow durſt ſign,
I might regain my mortal mould
As fair a form as thine."

She croſſed him once—ſhe croſſed him twice—
That lady was ſo brave;
The fouler grew his goblin hue,
The darker grew the cave.

She croſſed him thrice, that lady bold:
He roſe beneath her hand
The faireſt knight on Scottiſh mold,
Her brother, Ethert Brand!

Merry it is in the good green wood,
When the mavis and merle are ſinging,
But merrier were they in Dunfermline grey,
When all the bells were ringing.

XVI.

Juſt as the minſtrel ſounds were ſtaid,
A ſtranger climbed the ſteepy glade;
His martial ſtep, his ſtately mien,
His hunting ſuit of Lincoln green,
His eagle glance remembrance claims—
'Tis Snowdoun's Knight, 'tis James Fitz-James!
Ellen beheld as in a dream,
Then ſtarting, ſcarce ſuppreſſed a ſcream:
"Oh ſtranger! in ſuch hour of fear,
What evil hap has brought thee here?"

"An evil hap how can it be,
That bids me look again on thee?
By promiſe bound, my former guide
Met me betimes this morning tide,
And marſhall'd, over bank and bourne,
The happy path of my return."
"The happy path!—what! ſaid he nought
Of war, of battle to be fought,
Of guarded paſs?"—"No, by my faith!
Nor ſaw I aught could augur ſcathe."
"Oh haſte thee, Allan, to the kern
—Yonder his tartans I diſcern;
Learn thou his purpoſe, and conjure
That he will guide the ſtranger ſure!—
What prompted thee, unhappy man?
The meaneſt ſerf in Roderick's clan
Had not been bribed by love or fear,
Unknown to him, to guide thee here."

XVII.

"Sweet Ellen, dear my life muſt be,
Since it is worthy care from thee;
Yet life I hold but idle breath,
When love or honour's weighed with death.
Then let me profit by my chance,
And ſpeak my purpoſe bold at once.

I come to bear thee from a wild,
Where ne'er before ſuch bloſſom ſmiled ;
By this ſoft hand to lead thee far
From frantic ſcenes of feud and war.
Near Bochaſtle my horſes wait ;
They bear us ſoon to Stirling gate.
I'll place thee in a lovely bower,
I'll guard thee like a tender flower——"
"Oh ! huſh, Sir Knight ! 'twere female art
To ſay I do not read thy heart ;
Too much, before, my ſelfiſh ear
Was idly ſoothed my praiſe to hear.
That fatal bait hath lured thee back,
In deathful hour, o'er dangerous track ;
And how, oh how, can I atone
The wreck my vanity brought on !
One way remains—I'll tell him all—
Yes ! ſtruggling boſom, forth it ſhall !
Thou, whoſe light folly bears the blame,
Buy thine own pardon with thy ſhame !
But firſt—my father is a man
Outlawed and exiled, under ban ;
The price of blood is on his head,
With me 'twere infamy to wed.
Still would'ſt thou ſpeak ?—then hear the truth !
Fitz-James, there is a noble youth—

If yet he is !—expoſed for me
And mine to dread extremity—
Thou haſt the ſecret of my heart ;
Forgive, be generous, and depart."

XVIII.

Fitz-James knew every wily train
A lady's fickle heart to gain,
But here he knew and felt them vain.
There ſhot no glance from Ellen's eye,
To give her ſteadfaſt ſpeech the lie ;
In maiden confidence ſhe ſtood,
Though mantled in her cheek the blood,
And told her love with ſuch a ſigh
Of deep and hopeleſs agony,
As death had ſealed her Malcolm's doom,
And ſhe ſat ſorrowing on his tomb.
Hope vaniſhed from Fitz-James's eye,
But not with hope fled ſympathy.
He proffered to attend her ſide,
As brother would a ſiſter guide.
" Oh ! little know'ſt thou Roderick's heart !
Safer for both we go apart.
Oh haſte thee, and from Allan learn,
If thou may'ſt truſt yon wily kern."
With hand upon his forehead laid,
The conflict of his mind to ſhade,

A parting ſtep or two he made ;
Then, as ſome thought had croſſed his brain,
He pauſed, and turned, and came again.

XIX.

"Hear, lady, yet, a parting word !—
It chanced in fight that my poor ſword
Preſerved the life of Scotland's lord.
This ring the grateful monarch gave,
And bade, when I had boon to crave,
To bring it back and boldly claim
The recompenſe that I would name.
Ellen, I am no courtly lord,
But one who lives by lance and ſword,
Whoſe caſtle is his helm and ſhield,
His lordſhip, the embattled field.
What from a prince can I demand,
Who neither reck of ſtate nor land ?
Ellen, thy hand—the ring is thine ;
Each guard and uſher knows the ſign.
Seek thou the king without delay ;
This ſignet ſhall ſecure thy way ;
And claim thy ſuit, whate'er it be,
As ranſom of his pledge to me."
He placed the golden circlet on,
Pauſed—kiſſed her hand—and then was gone.

THE TROSACH'S DELL.

p. 127.

The aged Minſtrel ſtood aghaſt,
So haſtily Fitz-James ſhot paſt.
He joined his guide, and wending down
The ridges of the mountain brown,
Acroſs the ſtream they took their way,
That joins Loch-Katrine to Achray.

XX.

All in the Troſachs' glen was ſtill,
Noontide was ſleeping on the hill :
Sudden his guide whooped loud and high—
"Murdoch ! was that a ſignal cry ?"
He ſtammered forth—"I ſhout to ſcare
Yon raven from his dainty fare."
He looked—he knew the raven's prey,
His own brave ſteed :—"Ah ! gallant grey !
For thee—for me perchance—'t were well
We ne'er had ſeen the Troſachs' dell.
Murdoch, move firſt—but ſilently ;
Whiſtle or whoop, and thou ſhalt die."
Jealous and ſullen, on they fared,
Each ſilent, each upon his guard.

XXI.

Now wound the path its dizzy ledge
Around a precipice's edge,

When lo ! a waſted female form,
Blighted by wrath of ſun and ſtorm,
In tattered weeds and wild array,
Stood on a cliff beſide the way,
And glancing round her reſtleſs eye
Upon the wood, the rock, the ſky,
Seemed nought to mark, yet all to ſpy.
Her brow was wreathed with gaudy broom ;
With geſture wild ſhe waved a plume
Of feathers, which the eagles fling
To crag and cliff from duſky wing ;
Such ſpoils her deſperate ſtep had ſought,
Where ſcarce was footing for the goat.
The tartan plaid ſhe firſt deſcried,
And ſhrieked, till all the rocks replied ;
As loud ſhe laughed when near they drew,
For then the lowland garb ſhe knew ;
And then her hands ſhe wildly wrung,
And then ſhe wept, and then ſhe ſung.
She ſung !—the voice, in better time,
Perchance to harp or lute might chime ;
And now, though ſtrained and roughened, ſtill
Rung wildly ſweet to dale and hill.

XXII.

Song.

"They bid me ſleep, they bid me pray,
They ſay my brain is warped and wrung—
I cannot ſleep on highland brae,
I cannot pray in highland tongue.
But were I now where Allan glides,
Or heard my native Devan's tides,
So ſweetly would I reſt and pray
That heaven would cloſe my wintry day!

"'Twas thus my hair they made me braid,
They bade me to the church repair;
It was my bridal morn, they ſaid,
And my true love would meet me there.
But woe betide the cruel guile,
That drowned in blood the morning ſmile!
And woe betide the fairy dream!
I only waked to ſob and ſcream."

XXIII.

"Who is this maid? what means her lay?
She hovers o'er the hollow way,
And flutters wide her mantle grey,
As the lone heron ſpreads his wing,
By twilight, o'er a haunted ſpring."
"'Tis Blanche of Devan," Murdoch ſaid,
"A crazed and captive lowland maid,

Ta'en on the morn ſhe was a bride,
When Roderick forayed Devan-ſide.
The gay bridegroom reſiſtance made,
And felt our Chief's unconquered blade.
I marvel ſhe is now at large,
But oft ſhe 'ſcapes from Maudlin's charge ;
Hence, brain-ſick fool!" He raiſed his bow :
"Now, if thou ſtrikeſt her but one blow,
I'll pitch thee from the cliff as far
As ever peaſant pitched a bar."
"Thanks, champion, thanks!" the Maniac cried,
And preſſed her to Fitz-James's ſide.
"See the grey pennons I prepare,
To ſeek my true-love through the air!
I will not lend that ſavage groom,
To break his fall, one downy plume!
No!—deep amid diſjointed ſtones,
The wolves ſhall batten on his bones,
And then ſhall his deteſted plaid,
By buſh and briar in mid-air ſtaid,
Wave forth a banner fair and free,
Meet ſignal for their revelry."

XXIV.

"Huſh thee, poor maiden, and be ſtill!"
"Oh! thou look'ſt kindly, and I will.

Mine eye has dried and wafted been,
But ſtill it loves the Lincoln green;
And, though mine ear is all unſtrung,
Still, ſtill it loves the lowland tongue.

"For oh my ſweet William was foreſter true,
He ſtole door Blanche's heart away!
His coat it was all of the greenwood hue,
And ſo blythely he trilled the Lowland lay!

"It was not that I meant to tell . . .
But thou art wiſe, and gueſſeſt well."
Then, in a low and broken tone,
And hurried note, the ſong went on.
Still on the Clanſman, fearfully,
She fixed her apprehenſive eye;
Then turned it on the Knight, and then
Her look glanced wildly o'er the glen.

XXV.

"The toils are pitched, and the ſtakes are ſet,
Ever ſing merrily, merrily;
The bows they bend, and the knives they whet,
Hunters live ſo cheerily.

"It was a ſtag, a ſtag of ten,
Bearing his branches ſturdily;
He came ſtately down the glen,
Ever ſing hardily, hardily.

"It was there he met with a wounded doe,
She was bleeding deathfully;
She warned him of the toils below,
Oh ſo faithfully, faithfully!

"He had an eye, and he could heed,
Ever ſing warily, warily;
He had a foot, and he could ſpeed—
Hunters watch ſo narrowly."

XXVI.

Fitz-James's mind was paſſion-toſs'd,
When Ellen's hints and fears were loſt;
But Murdoch's ſhout ſuſpicion wrought,
And Blanche's ſong conviction brought.
Not like a ſtag that ſpies the ſnare,
But lion of the hunt aware,
He waved at once his blade on high,
"Diſcloſe thy treachery, or die!"
Forth at full ſpeed the Clanſman flew,
But in his race his bow he drew:
The ſhaft juſt grazed Fitz-James's creſt,
And thrilled in Blanche's faded breaſt.
Murdoch of Alpine! prove thy ſpeed,
For ne'er had Alpine's ſon ſuch need!
With heart of fire, and foot of wind,
The fierce avenger is behind!

Fate judges of the rapid ſtrife—
The forfeit death—the prize is life!
Thy kindred ambuſh lies before,
Cloſe couched upon the heathery moor;
Them couldſt thou reach!—it may not be—
Thine ambuſhed kin thou ne'er ſhalt ſee,
The fiery Saxon gains on thee!
Reſiſtleſs ſpeeds the deadly thruſt,
As lightning ſtrikes the pine to duſt;
With foot and hand Fitz-James muſt ſtrain,
Ere he can win his blade again.
Bent o'er the fall'n, with falcon eye,
He grimly ſmiled to ſee him die;
Then ſlower wended back his way,
Where the poor maiden bleeding lay.

XXVII.

She ſate beneath the birchen tree,
Her elbow reſting on her knee;
She had withdrawn the fatal ſhaft,
And gazed on it, and feebly laughed;
Her wreath of broom and feathers grey,
Daggled with blood, beſide her lay.
The Knight to ſtaunch the life-ſtream tried—
"Stranger, it is in vain!" ſhe cried:

"This hour of death has given me more
"Of reaſon's power than years before;
For, as these ebbing veins decay,
My frenzied viſions fade away.
A helpleſs injured wretch I die,
And ſomething tells me in thine eye,
That thou wert mine avenger born.
Seeſt thou this treſs? Oh! ſtill I've worn
This little treſs of yellow hair,
Through danger, frenzy, and deſpair!
It once was bright and clear as thine,
But blood and tears have dimmed its ſhine.
I will not tell thee when 'twas ſhred,
Nor from what guiltleſs victim's head—
My brain would turn!—but it ſhall wave
Like plumage on thy helmet brave,
Till ſun and wind ſhall bleach the ſtain,
And thou wilt bring it me again.
I waver ſtill!—Oh God! more bright
Let Reaſon beam her parting light!—
Oh! by thy knighthood's honoured ſign,
And for thy life preſerved by mine,
When thou ſhalt ſee a darkſome man,
Who boaſts him Chief of Alpine's clan,
With tartans broad and ſhadowy plume,
And hand of blood, and brow of gloom,

Be thy heart bold, thy weapon ſtrong,
And wreak poor Blanche of Devan's wrong!—
They watch for thee by paſs and fell . . .
Avoid the path . . Oh God! . . farewell!"

XXVIII.

A kindly heart had brave Fitz-James,
Faſt poured his eyes at pity's claims;
And now with mingled grief and ire,
He ſaw the murdered maid expire.
"God, in my need, be my relief,
As I wreak this on yonder Chief!"—
A lock from Blanche's treſſes fair
He blended with her bridegroom's hair;
The mingled braid in blood he dyed,
And placed it on his bonnet ſide:
"By Him whoſe word is truth! I ſwear,
No other favour will I wear,
Till this ſad token I embrue
In the beſt blood of Roderick Dhu!—
But hark! what means yon faint halloo?
The chaſe is up—but they ſhall know,
The ſtag at bay's a dangerous foe."
Barred from the known but guarded way,
Through copſe and cliffs Fitz-James muſt ſtray,

And oft muſt change his deſperate track,
By ſtream and precipice turned back.
Heartleſs, fatigued, and faint, at length,
From lack of food, and loſs of ſtrength,
He couch'd him in a thicket hoar,
And thought his toils and perils o'er :—
" Of all my raſh adventures paſt,
This frantic feat muſt prove the laſt !
Who e'er ſo mad but might have gueſſ'd
That all this highland hornet's neſt
Would muſter up in ſwarms ſo ſoon
As e'er they heard of bands at Doune ?
Like bloodhounds now they ſearch me out—
Hark, to the whiſtle and the ſhout !
If farther through the wilds I go,
I only fall upon the foe ;
I'll couch me here till evening grey,
Then darkling try my dangerous way."

XXIX.

The ſhades of eve come ſlowly down,
The woods are wrapped in deeper brown,
The owl awakens from her dell,
The fox is heard upon the fell ;
Enough remains of glimmering light
To guide the wanderer's ſteps aright,

Yet not enough from far to ſhow
His figure to the watchful foe.
With cautious ſtep, and ear awake,
He climbs the crag and threads the brake;
And not the ſummer ſolſtice, there,
Temper'd the midnight mountain air,
But every breeze that ſwept the wold
Benumbed his drenched limbs with cold.
In dread, in danger, and alone,
Famiſhed and chilled, through ways unknown,
Tangled and ſteep, he journey'd on;
Till, as a rock's huge point he turned,
A watch-fire cloſe before him burned.

XXX.

Beſide its embers red and clear,
Baſked, in his plaid, a mountaineer;
And up he ſprung with ſword in hand—
"Thy name and purpoſe! Saxon, ſtand!"
"A ſtranger." "What doſt thou require?"
"Reſt and a guide, and food and fire.
My life's beſet, my path is loſt,
The gale has chilled my limbs with froſt."
"Art thou a friend to Roderick?" "No."
"Thou dareſt not call thyſelf a foe?"

"I dare! to him and all the band
He brings to aid his murderous hand."
"Bold words! but though the beaſt of game
The privilege of chaſe may claim,
Though ſpace and law the ſtag we lend,
Ere hound we ſlip, or bow we bend,
Who ever reck'd, where, how, or when,
The prowling fox was trapped or ſlain?
Thus, treacherous ſcouts—yet ſure they lie,
Who ſay thou cameſt a ſecret ſpy!"
"They do, by heaven! Come Roderick Dhu,
And of his clan the boldeſt two,
And let me but till morning reſt,
I write the falſehood on their creſt."
"If by the blaze I mark aright,
Thou bear'ſt the belt and ſpur of Knight."
"Then by theſe tokens may'ſt thou know,
Each proud oppreſſor's mortal foe."
"Enough, enough; ſit down and ſhare
A ſoldier's couch, a ſoldier's fare."

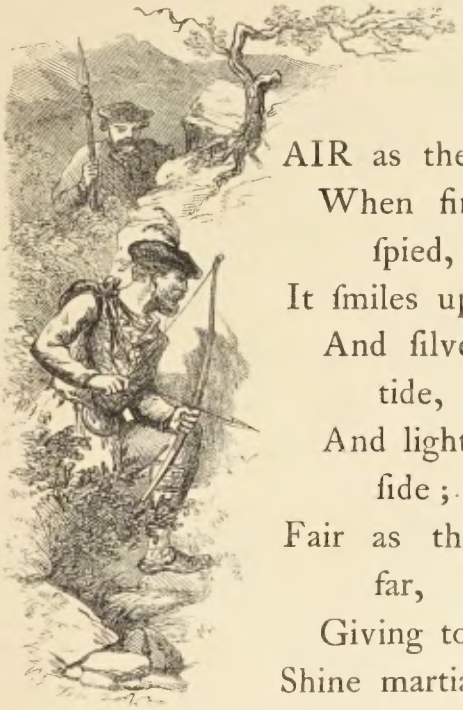
XXXI.

He gave him of his highland cheer,
The hardened fleſh of mountain deer;
Dry fuel on the fire he laid,
And bade the Saxon ſhare his plaid.

He tended him like welcome gueſt,
Then thus his further ſpeech addreſſed :—
" Stranger, I am to Roderick Dhu
A clanſman born, a kinſman true ;
Each word againſt his honour ſpoke,
Demands of me avenging ſtroke ;
Yet more—upon thy fate, 'tis said,
A mighty augury is laid.
It reſts with me to wind my horn,
Thou art with numbers overborne ;
It reſts with me, here, brand to brand,
Worn as thou art, to bid thee ſtand :
But not for clan nor kindred's cauſe,
Will I depart from honour's laws ;
To aſſail a wearied man were ſhame,
And ſtranger is a holy name ;
Guidance and reſt, and food and fire,
In vain he never muſt require.
Then reſt thee here till dawn of day ;
Myſelf will guide thee on the way,
O'er ſtock and ſtone, through watch and ward,
Till paſt Clan-Alpine's outmoſt guard,
As far as Coilantogle's ford—
From thence thy warrant is thy ſword."
" I take thy courteſy, by Heaven,
As freely as 'tis nobly given ! "

"Well, reſt thee ; for the bittern's cry
Sings us the lake's wild lullaby."
With that he ſhook the gathered heath,
And ſpread his plaid upon the wreath ;
And the brave foemen, ſide by ſide,
Lay peaceful down, like brothers tried,
And ſlept until the dawning beam
Purpled the mountain and the ſtream.

Canto Fifth.—The Combat.



I.

AIR as the earlieſt beam of eaſtern light,
When firſt, by the bewildered pilgrim ſpied,
It ſmiles upon the dreary brow of night,
And ſilvers o'er the torrent's foaming tide,
And lights the fearful path on mountain ſide;
Fair as that beam, although the faireſt far,
Giving to horror grace, to danger pride,
Shine martial Faith, and Courteſy's bright ſtar,
Through all the wreckful ſtorms that cloud the brow of war.

II.

That early beam, ſo fair and ſheen,
Was twinkling through the hazel ſcreen,

When, rouſing at its glimmer red,
The warriors left their lowly bed,
Looked out upon the dappled ſky,
Muttered their ſoldier matins by,
And then awaked their fire, to ſteal,
As ſhort and rude, their ſoldier meal.
That o'er, the Gael around him threw
His graceful plaid of varied hue,
And, true to promiſe, led the way,
By thicket green and mountain grey.
A wildering path ! they winded now
Along the precipice's brow,
Commanding the rich ſcenes beneath,
The windings of the Forth and Teith,
And all the vales between that lie,
Till Stirling's turrets melt in ſky ;
Then, ſunk in copſe, their fartheſt glance
Gained not the length of horſeman's lance.
'Twas oft ſo ſteep, the foot was fain
Aſſiſtance from the hand to gain ;
So tangled oft, that, burſting through,
Each hawthorn ſhed her ſhowers of dew—
That diamond dew, ſo pure and clear,
It rivals all but Beauty's tear !

BENLEDI.

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III.

At length they came where, ſtern and ſteep,
The hill ſinks down upon the deep.
Here Vennachar in ſilver flows,
There, ridge on ridge, Benledi roſe ;
Ever the hollow path twined on,
Beneath ſteep bank and threatening ſtone ;
An hundred men might hold the poſt
With hardihood againſt a hoſt.
The rugged mountain's ſcanty cloak
Was dwarfiſh ſhrubs of birch and oak,
With ſhingles bare, and cliffs between,
And patches bright of bracken green,
And heather black, that waved ſo high,
It held the copſe in rivalry.
But where the lake ſlept deep and ſtill,
Dank oſiers fringed the ſwamp and hill ;
And oft both path and hill were torn,
Where wintry torrent down had borne,
And heaped upon the cumbered land
Its wreck of gravel, rocks, and ſand.
So toilſome was the road to trace,
The guide, abating of his pace,
Led ſlowly through the paſs's jaws,
And aſked Fitz-James, by what ſtrange cauſe

He ſought theſe wilds, traverſed by few
Without a paſs from Roderick Dhu ?

IV.

" Brave Gael, my paſs, in danger tried,
Hangs in my belt, and by my ſide ;
Yet ſooth to tell," the Saxon ſaid,
" I dreamed not now to claim its aid.
When here, but three days ſince, I came,
Bewildered in purſuit of game,
All ſeemed as peaceful and as ſtill,
As the miſt ſlumbering on yon hill ;
Thy dangerous chief was then afar,
Nor ſoon expected back from war.
Thus ſaid, at leaſt, my mountain guide,
Though deep, perchance, the villain lied."
" Yet why a ſecond venture try ? "
" A warrior thou, and aſk me why !
Moves our free courſe by ſuch fixed cauſe,
As gives the poor mechanic laws ?
Enough, I ſought to drive away
The lazy hours of peaceful day ;
Slight cauſe will then ſuffice to guide
A Knight's free footſteps far and wide ;—
A falcon flown, a greyhound ſtrayed,
The merry glance of mountain maid ;

Or, if a path be dangerous known,
The danger's ſelf is lure alone."

V.

"Thy ſecret keep, I urge thee not;
Yet, ere again ye ſought this ſpot,
Say, heard ye nought of lowland war,
Againſt Clan-Alpine raiſed by Mar?"
"No, by my word; of bands prepared
To guard King James's ſports I heard;
Nor doubt I aught, but, when they hear
This muſter of the mountaineer,
Their pennons will abroad be flung,
Which elſe in Doune had peaceful hung."
"Free be they flung!—for we were loth
Their ſilken folds ſhould feaſt the moth.
Free be they flung!—as free ſhall wave
Clan-Alpine's pine in banner brave.
But, ſtranger, peaceful ſince you came,
Bewildered in the mountain game,
Whence the bold boaſt by which you ſhow
Vich-Alpine's vowed and mortal foe?"—
"Warrior, but yeſter-morn I knew
Nought of thy Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
Save as an outlaw'd deſperate man,
The chief of a rebellious clan,

Who, in the Regent's court and ſight,
With ruffian dagger ſtabbed a knight ;
Yet this alone might from his part
Sever each true and loyal heart."

VI.

Wrothful at ſuch arraignment foul,
Dark lowered the clanſman's ſable ſcowl.
A ſpace he pauſed, then ſternly ſaid—
" And heard'ſt thou why he drew his blade ?
Heard'ſt thou that ſhameful word and blow
Brought Roderick's vengeance on his foe ?
What recked the Chieftain, if he ſtood
On highland heath or Holy-Rood ?
He writes ſuch wrong where it is given,
If it were in the court of heaven."
" Still was it outrage ;—yet, 'tis true,
Not then claimed ſovereignty his due ;
While Albany, with feeble hand,
Held borrowed truncheon of command,
The young king, mew'd in Stirling tower,
Was ſtranger to reſpect and power.
But then, thy chieftain's robber life !—
Winning mean prey by cauſeleſs ſtrife,
Wrenching from ruined lowland ſwain
His herds and harveſt reared in vain—

Methinks a ſoul like thine ſhould ſcorn
The ſpoils from ſuch foul foray borne."

VII.

The Gael beheld him grim the while,
And anſwered with diſdainful ſmile—
"Saxon, from yonder mountain high,
I marked thee ſend delighted eye,
Far to the ſouth and eaſt, where lay,
Extended in ſucceſſion gay,
Deep waving fields and paſtures green,
With gentle ſlopes and groves between:—
Theſe fertile plains, that ſoftened vale,
Were once the birthright of the Gael;
The ſtranger came with iron hand,
And from our fathers reft the land.
Where dwell we now? See, rudely ſwell
Crag over crag, and fell o'er fell.
Aſk we this ſavage hill we tread,
For fattened ſteer or houſehold bread;
Aſk we for flocks theſe ſhingles dry,
And well the mountain might reply—
'To you, as to your ſires of yore,
Belong the target and claymore!
I give you ſhelter in my breaſt,
Your own good blades muſt win the reſt.'

Pent in this fortreſs of the North,
Think'ſt thou we will not ſally forth,
To ſpoil the ſpoiler as we may,
And from the robber rend the prey?
Ay, by my ſoul!—While on yon plain
The Saxon rears one ſhock of grain;
While, of ten thouſand herds, there ſtrays
But one along yon river's maze—
The Gael, of plain and river heir,
Shall, with ſtrong hand, redeem his ſhare.
Where live the mountain chiefs who hold,
That plundering lowland field and fold
Is aught but retribution true?
Seek other cauſe 'gainst Roderick Dhu."

VIII.

Anſwered Fitz-James,—"And, if I ſought,
Think'ſt thou no other could be brought?
What deem ye of my path waylaid,
My life given o'er to ambuſcade?"
"As of a meed to raſhneſs due:
Hadſt thou ſent warning fair and true—
I ſeek my hound, or falcon ſtrayed,
I ſeek, good faith, a Highland maid—
Free hadſt thou been to come and go;
But ſecret path marks ſecret foe.

Nor yet, for this, even as a ſpy,
Hadſt thou, unheard, been doomed to die,
Save to fulfil an augury."
"Well, let it paſs; nor will I now
Freſh cauſe of enmity avow,
To chafe thy mood and cloud thy brow.
Enough, I am by promiſe tied
To match me with this man of pride:
Twice have I ſought Clan-Alpine's glen
In peace; but when I come agen,
I come with banner, brand, and bow,
As leader ſeeks his mortal foe.
For love-lorn ſwain, in lady's bower,
Ne'er panted for the appointed hour,
As I, until before me ſtand
This rebel Chieftain and his band."

IX.

"Have then thy wiſh!"—he whiſtled ſhrill,
And he was anſwered from the hill;
Wild as the ſcream of the curlew,
From crag to crag the ſignal flew,
Inſtant, through copſe and heath, aroſe,
Bonnets, and ſpears, and bended bows;
On right, on left, above, below,
Sprang up at once the lurking foe;

From ſhingles grey their lances ſtart,
The bracken buſh ſends forth the dart,
The ruſhes and the willow-wand
Are briſtling into axe and brand,
And every tuft of broom gives life
To plaided warrior armed for ſtrife.
That whiſtle garriſon'd the glen
At once with full five hundred men,
As if the yawning hill to heaven
A ſubterranean hoſt had given.
Watching their leader's beck and will,
All ſilent there they ſtood and ſtill.
Like the looſe crags whoſe threatening maſs
Lay tottering o'er the hollow paſs,
As if an infant's touch could urge
Their headlong paſſage down the verge,
With ſtep and weapon forward flung,
Upon the mountain-ſide they hung.
The mountaineer caſt glance of pride
Along Benledi's living ſide.
Then fixed his eye and ſable brow
Full on Fitz-James—"How ſay'ſt thou now?
Theſe are Clan-Alpine's warriors true;
And, Saxon—I am Roderick Dhu!"

X.

Fitz-James was brave :—though to his heart
The life-blood thrilled with ſudden ſtart,
He mann'd himſelf with dauntleſs air,
Returned the Chief his haughty ſtare,
His back againſt a rock he bore,
And firmly placed his foot before :—
"Come one, come all ! this rock ſhall fly
From its firm baſe as ſoon as I !"
Sir Roderick marked—and in his eyes
Reſpect was mingled with ſurpriſe,
And the ſtern joy which warriors feel
In foemen worthy of their ſteel.
Short ſpace he ſtood—then waved his hand ;
Down ſank the diſappearing band ;
Each warrior vaniſhed where he ſtood,
In broom or bracken, heath or wood ;
Sank brand, and ſpear, and bended bow,
In oſiers pale and copſes low ;
It ſeemed as if their mother Earth
Had ſwallowed up her warlike birth.
The wind's laſt breath had toſſed in air
Pennon, and plaid, and plumage fair—
The next but ſwept a lone hill-ſide,
Where heath and fern were waving wide ;

The ſun's laſt glance was glinted back,
From ſpear and glaive, from targe and jack—
The next, all unreflected, ſhone
On bracken green and cold grey ſtone.

XI.

Fitz-James looked round—yet ſcarce believed
The witneſs that his ſight received ;
Such apparition well might ſeem
Deluſion of a dreadful dream.
Sir Roderick in ſuſpenſe he eyed,
And to his look the Chief replied,
"Fear nought—nay, that I need not ſay—
But—doubt not aught from mine array.
Thou art my gueſt ;—I pledged my word
As far as Coilantogle's ford :
Nor would I call a clanſman's brand
For aid againſt one valiant hand,
Though on our ſtrife lay every vale
Rent by the Saxon from the Gael.
So move we on ;—I only meant
To ſhow the reed on which you leant,
Deeming this path you might purſue
Without a paſs from Roderick Dhu."
They moved :—I ſaid Fitz-James was brave
As ever knight that belted glaive ;

Yet dare not ſay, that now his blood
Kept on its wont and tempered flood,
As, following Roderick's ſtride, he drew
That ſeeming loneſome pathway through,
Which yet, by fearful proof, was rife
With lances, that to take his life
Waited but ſignal from a guide,
So late diſhonoured and defied.
Ever, by ſtealth, his eye ſought round
The vaniſhed guardians of the ground,
And ſtill from copſe and heather deep,
Fancy ſaw ſpear and broadſword peep,
And in the plover's ſhrilly ſtrain,
The ſignal whiſtle heard again.
Nor breathed he free, till far behind
The paſs was leſt; for then they wind
Along a wide and level green,
Where neither tree nor tuft was ſeen,
Nor ruſh, nor buſh of broom was near,
To hide a bonnet or a ſpear.

XII.

The Chief in ſilence ſtrode before,
And reached that torrent's ſounding ſhore,
Which, daughter of three mighty lakes,
From Vennachar in ſilver breaks,

Sweeps through the plain, and ceaſeleſs mines
On Bochaſtle the mouldering lines,
Where Rome, the Empreſs of the world,
Of yore her eagle wings unfurl'd.
And here his courſe the Chieftain ſtaid,
Threw down his target and his plaid,
And to the lowland warrior ſaid :—
"Bold Saxon! to his promiſe juſt,
Vich-Alpine has diſcharged his truſt.
This murderous chief, this ruthleſs man,
This head of a rebellious clan,
Hath led thee ſafe through watch and ward,
Far paſt Clan-Alpine's outmoſt guard.
Now, man to man, and ſteel to ſteel,
A chieftain's vengeance thou ſhalt feel,
See, here, all vantageleſs I ſtand,
Armed, like thyſelf, with ſingle brand ;
For this is Coilantogle's ford,
And thou muſt keep thee by thy ſword."

XIII.

The Saxon pauſed :—"I ne'er delayed,
When foeman bade me draw my blade ;
Nay more, brave Chief, I vow'd thy death ;
Yet ſure thy fair and generous faith,

COILANTOGLE'S FORD.

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And my deep debt for life preſerved,
A better meed have well deſerved :—
Can nought but blood our feud atone ?
Are there no means ? "—" No, Stranger, none !
And hear—to fire thy flagging zeal—
The Saxon cauſe reſts on thy ſteel ;
For thus ſpoke Fate, by prophet bred
Between the living and the dead :
" Who ſpills the foremoſt foeman's life,
His party conquers in the ſtrife."
" Then, by my word," the Saxon ſaid,
" The riddle is already read.
Seek yonder brake beyond the cliff—
There lies Red Murdoch, ſtark and ſtiff.
Thus Fate has ſolved her prophecy,
Then yield to Fate, and not to me.
To James, at Stirling, let us go,
When, if thou wilt be ſtill his foe,
Or if the King ſhall not agree
To grant thee grace and favour free,
I plight mine honour, oath, and word,
That, to thy native ſtrengths reſtored,
With each advantage ſhalt thou ſtand,
That aids thee now to guard thy land."

XIV.

Dark lightning flaſhed from Roderick's eye—
"Soars thy preſumption, then, ſo high,
Becauſe a wretched kern ye ſlew,
Homage to name to Roderick Dhu?
He yields not, he, to man nor Fate!
Thou add'ſt but fuel to my hate—
My clanſman's blood demands revenge.
Not yet prepared? By heaven, I change
My thought, and hold thy valour light
As that of ſome vain carpet-knight,
Who ill deſerved my courteous care,
And whoſe beſt boaſt is but to wear
A braid of his fair lady's hair."
"I thank thee, Roderick, for the word!
It nerves my heart, it ſteels my ſword;
For I have ſworn this braid to ſtain
In the beſt blood that warms thy vein.
Now, truce, farewell! and ruth, be gone!—
Yet think not that by thee alone,
Proud Chief! can courteſy be ſhown;
Though not from copſe, or heath, or cairn,
Start at my whiſtle clanſmen ſtern,
Of this ſmall horn one feeble blaſt
Would fearful odds againſt thee caſt.

But fear not—doubt not—which thou wilt—
We try this quarrel hilt to hilt."
Then each at once his faulchion drew,
Each on the ground his ſcabbard threw,
Each looked to ſun, and ſtream, and plain,
As what they ne'er might ſee again;
Then foot, and point, and eye oppoſed,
In dubious ſtriſe they darkly cloſed.

XV.

Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
That on the field his targe he threw,
Whoſe brazen ſtuds and tough bull-hide
Had death ſo often daſhed aſide;
For, trained abroad his arms to wield,
Fitz-James's blade was ſword and ſhield,
He practiſed every paſs and ward,
To thruſt, to ſtrike, to feint, to guard;
While leſs expert, though ſtronger far,
The Gael maintained unequal war.
Three times in cloſing ſtrife they ſtood,
And thrice the Saxon ſword drank blood—
No ſtinted draught, no ſcanty tide,
The guſhing flood the tartans dyed.
Fierce Roderick felt the fatal drain,
And ſhowered his blows like wintry rain,

And, as firm rock, or caſtle-roof,
Againſt the winter ſhower is proof,
The foe, invulnerable ſtill,
Foiled his wild rage by ſteady ſkill;
Till, at advantage ta'en, his brand
Forced Roderick's weapon from his hand,
And, backwards borne upon the lea,
Brought the proud Chieftain to his knee.

XVI.

"Now, yield thee, or, by Him who made
The world, thy heart's blood dyes my blade!"
"Thy threats, thy mercy, I defy!
Let recreant yield who fears to die."
Like adder darting from his coil,
Like wolf that daſhes through the toil,
Like mountain-cat who guards her young,
Full at Fitz-James's throat he ſprung,
Received, but reck'd not of a wound,
And locked his arms his foeman round.
Now, gallant Saxon, hold thine own!
No maiden's hand is round thee thrown!
That deſperate graſp thy frame might feel
Through bars of braſs and triple ſteel!
They tug, they ſtrain!—down, down, they go,
The Gael above, Fitz-James below!

The Chieftain's gripe his throat compreſs'd,
His knee was planted on his breaſt;
His clotted locks he backward threw,
Acroſs his brow his hand he drew,
From blood and miſt to clear his ſight,
Then gleam'd aloft his dagger bright!
But hate and fury ill ſupplied
The ſtream of life's exhauſted tide,
And all too late the advantage came,
To turn the odds of deadly game;
For, while the dagger gleam'd on high,
Reeled ſoul and ſenſe, reeled brain and eye.
Down came the blow! but in the heath
The erring blade found bloodless ſheath.
The ſtruggling foe may now unclaſp
The fainting Chief's relaxing graſp;
Unwounded from the dreadful cloſe,
But breathleſs all, Fitz-James aroſe.

XVII.

He faltered thanks to Heaven for life,
Redeemed, unhoped, from deſperate ſtriſe;
Next on his foe his look he caſt,
Whoſe every gaſp appeared his laſt;
In Roderick's gore he dipp'd the braid,
"Poor Blanche! thy wrongs are dearly paid;

Yet with thy foe muſt die, or live,
The praiſe that Faith and Valour give."
With that he blew a bugle-note,
Undid the collar from his throat,
Unbonnetted, and by the wave
Sate down his brow and hands to lave.
Then faint afar are heard the feet
Of ruſhing ſteeds in gallop fleet;
The ſounds increaſe, and now are ſeen
Four mounted ſquires in Lincoln green;
Two who bear lance, and two who lead,
By looſened rein, a ſaddled ſteed;
Each onward held his headlong courſe,
And by Fitz-James rein'd up his horſe,
With wonder viewed the bloody ſpot—
"Exclaim not, gallants! queſtion not.
You, Herbert and Luffneſs, alight,
And bind the wounds of yonder knight;
Let the grey palfrey bear his weight,
We deſtined for a fairer freight,
And bring him on to Stirling ſtraight;
I will before at better ſpeed,
To ſeek freſh horſe and fitting weed.
The ſun rides high; I muſt be boune,
To ſee the archer-game at noon;
But lightly Bayard clears the lea.
De Vaux and Herries, follow me!

XVIII.

"Stand, Bayard, ſtand!" the ſteed obeyed,
With arching neck and bended head,
And glancing eye, and quivering ear,
As if he loved his lord to hear.
No foot Fitz-James in ſtirrup ſtaid,
No graſp upon the ſaddle laid,
But wreathed his left hand in the mane,
And lightly bounded from the plain,
Turned on the horſe his armed heel,
And ſtirred his courage with the ſteel.
Bounded the fiery ſteed in air,
The rider ſate erect and fair,
Then, like a bolt, from ſteel croſs-bow
Forth launched, along the plain they go.
They daſhed that rapid torrent through,
And up Carhonie's hill they flew;
Still at the gallop pricked the Knight,
His merry-men followed as they might.
Along thy banks, ſwift Teith! they ride,
And in the race they mock thy tide;
Torry and Lendrick now are paſt,
And Deanſtown lies behind them caſt;
They riſe, the bannered towers of Doune,
They ſink in diſtant woodland ſoon;

Blair-Drummond ſees the hoofs ſtrike fire,
They ſweep like breeze through Ochtertyre;
They mark juſt glance and diſappear
The lofty brow of ancient Keir;
They bathe their courſers' ſweltering ſides,
Dark Forth! amid thy ſluggiſh tides,
And on the oppoſing ſhore take ground,
With plaſh, with ſcramble, and with bound.
Right hand they leave thy cliffs, Craig-forth,
And ſoon the bulwark of the North,
Grey Stirling, with her towers and town,
Upon their fleet career looked down.

XIX.

As up the flinty path they ſtrained,
Sudden his ſteed the leader reined;
A ſignal to his ſquire he flung,
Who inſtant to his ſtirrup ſprung:—
"Seeſt thou, De Vaux, yon woodſman grey,
Who town-ward holds the rocky way,
Of ſtature tall and poor array?
Mark'ſt thou the firm, yet active ſtride,
With which he ſcales the mountain ſide?
Know'ſt thou from whence he comes, or whom?"
"No, by my word;—a burly groom

He ſeems, who in the field or chaſe
A Baron's train would nobly grace."
"Out, out, De Vaux! can fear ſupply,
And jealouſy, no ſharper eye?
Afar, ere to the hill he drew,
That ſtately form and ſtep I knew;
Like form in Scotland is not ſeen,
Treads not ſuch ſtep on Scottiſh green.
'Tis James of Douglas, by Saint Serle!
The uncle of the baniſhed Earl.
Away, away, to court, to ſhow
The near approach of dreaded foe:
The king muſt ſtand upon his guard;
Douglas and he muſt meet prepared."
Then right hand wheeled their ſteeds, and ſtraight
They won the caſtle's poſtern gate.

XX.

The Douglas, who had bent his way
From Cambus-Kenneth's abbey grey,
Now, as he climbed the rocky ſhelf,
Held ſad communion with himſelf:—
"Yes! all is true my fears could frame;
A priſoner lies the noble Græme,
And fiery Roderick ſoon will feel
The vengeance of the royal ſteel.

I, only I, can ward their fate—
God grant the ranſom come not late!
The Abbeſs hath her promiſe given,
My child ſhall be the bride of heaven;—
Be pardoned one repining tear!
For He who gave her, knows how dear
How excellent—but that is by,
And now my buſineſs is to die.
Ye towers! within whoſe circuit dread
A Douglas by his ſovereign bled,
And thou, oh ſad and fatal mound!
That oft haſt heard the death-axe ſound,
As on the nobleſt of the land
Fell the ſtern headſman's bloody hand—
The dungeon, block, and nameleſs tomb
Prepare—for Douglas ſeeks his doom!
But hark! what blythe and jolly peal
Makes the Franciſcan ſteeple reel?
And ſee! upon the crowded ſtreet,
In motley groups what maſquers meet!
Banner and pageant, pipe and drum,
And merry morrice-dancers come.
I gueſs, by all this quaint array,
The burghers hold their ſports to-day.
James will be there—he loves ſuch ſhow,
Where the good yeoman bends his bow,

And the tough wreſtler foils his foe,
As well as where, in proud career,
The high-born tilter ſhivers ſpear.
I'll follow to the Caſtle-park,
And play my prize—King James ſhall mark,
If age has tamed theſe ſinews ſtark,
Whoſe force ſo oft, in happier days,
His boyiſh wonder loved to praiſe."

XXI.

The Caſtle gates were open flung,
The quivering draw-bridge rocked and rung,
And echoed loud the flinty ſtreet
Beneath the courſers' clattering feet,
As ſlowly down the deep deſcent
Fair Scotland's King and nobles went,
While all along the crowded way
Was jubilee and loud huzza.
And ever James was bending low,
To his white jennet's ſaddle-bow,
Doffing his cap to city dame,
Who ſmiled and bluſhed for pride and ſhame.
And well the ſimperer might be vain—
He choſe the faireſt of the train.
Gravely he greets each city ſire,
Commends each pageant's quaint attire,

Gives to the dancers thanks aloud,
And ſmiles and nods upon the crowd,
Who rend the heavens with their acclaims,
"Long live the Commons' King, King James!"
Behind the King thronged peer and knight,
And noble dame and damſel bright,
Whoſe fiery ſteeds, ill brooked the ſtay
Of the ſteep ſtreet and crowded way.
But in the train you might diſcern
Dark lowering brow and viſage ſtern:
There nobles mourned their pride reſtrained,
And the mean burghers' joys diſdained;
And chiefs, who, hoſtage for their clan,
Were each from home a baniſhed man,
There thought upon their own grey tower,
Their waving woods, their feudal power,
And deemed themſelves a ſhameful part
Of pageant, which they curſed at heart.

XXII.

Now, in the Caſtle-park, drew out
Their chequered bands the joyous route.
There morricers, with bell at heel,
And blade in hand, their mazes wheel;
But chief, beſide the butts, there ſtand
Bold Robin Hood and all his band—

Friar Tuck with quarter-ſtaff and cowl,
Old Scathelocke with his ſurly ſcowl,
Maid Marian, fair as ivory bone,
Scarlet, and Mutch, and Little John ;
Their bugles challenge all that will,
In archery to prove their ſkill.
The Douglas bent a bow of might—
His firſt ſhaft centered in the white.
And when in turn he ſhot again,
His ſecond ſplit the firſt in twain.
From the King's hand muſt Douglas take
A ſilver dart, the archers' ſtake ;
Fondly he watched with watery eye,
Some anſwering glance of ſympathy—
No kind emotion made reply !
Indifferent as to archer wight,
The monarch gave the arrow bright.

XXIII.

Now, clear the ring ! for, hand to hand,
The manly wreſtlers take their ſtand.
Two o'er the reſt ſuperior roſe,
And proud demanded mightier foes,
Nor called in vain ; for Douglas came.
—For life is Hugh of Larbert lame ;

Scarce better John of Alloa's fare,
Whom ſenſeleſs home his comrades bear.
Prize of the wreſtling match, the King
To Douglas gave a golden ring,
While coldly glanced his eye of blue,
As frozen drop of wintry dew.
Douglas would ſpeak, but in his breaſt
His ſtruggling ſoul his words ſuppreſſ'd :
Indignant then he turned him where
Their arms the brawny yeomen bare,
To hurl the maſſive bar in air.
When each his utmoſt ſtrength had ſhown,
The Douglas rent an earth-faſt ſtone
From its deep bed, then heaved it high,
And ſent the fragment through the ſky,
A rood beyond the fartheſt mark ;
And ſtill in Stirling's royal park,
The grey-haired ſires, who know the paſt,
To ſtrangers point the Douglas-caſt,
And moraliſe on the decay
Of Scottiſh ſtrength in modern day.

XXIV.

The vale with loud applauſes rang,
The Ladies' Rock ſent back the clang ;

The King, with look unmoved, beſtowed
A purſe well filled with pieces broad.
Indignant ſmiled the Douglas proud,
And threw the gold among the crowd,
Who now, with anxious wonder, ſcan,
And ſharper glance, the dark grey man ;
Till whiſpers roſe among the throng,
That heart ſo free, and hand ſo ſtrong,
Muſt to the Douglas blood belong :
The old men mark'd, and ſhook the head,
To ſee his hair with ſilver ſpread,
And wink'd aſide, and told each ſon
Of feats upon the Engliſh done,
Ere Douglas of the ſtalwart hand
Was exiled from his native land.
The women praiſed his ſtately form,
Though wreck'd by many a winter's ſtorm ;
The youth, with awe and wonder, ſaw
His ſtrength ſurpaſſing nature's law.
Thus judged, as is their wont, the crowd,
Till murmur roſe to clamours loud.
But not a glance from that proud ring
Of peers who circled round the King,
With Douglas held communion kind,
Or called the baniſh'd man to mind ;

No, not from thoſe who, at the chaſe,
Once held his ſide the honoured place,
Begirt his board, and, in the field,
Found ſafety underneath his ſhield ;
For he, whom royal eyes diſown,
When was his form to courtiers known !

XXV.

The monarch ſaw the gambols flag,
And bade let looſe a gallant ſtag,
Whoſe pride, the holiday to crown,
Two favourite grey-hounds ſhould pull down,
That veniſon free, and Bourdeaux wine,
Might ſerve the archery to dine.
But Lufra—whom from Douglas' ſide
Nor bribe nor threat could e'er divide—
The fleeteſt hound in all the North,
Brave Lufra ſaw, and darted forth.
She leſt the royal hounds mid-way,
And, daſhing on the antler'd prey,
Sunk her ſharp muzzle in his flank,
And deep the flowing life-blood drank.
The King's ſtout huntſman ſaw the ſport
By ſtrange intruder broken ſhort,
Came up, and, with his leaſh unbound,
In anger ſtruck the noble hound.

The Douglas had endured, that morn,
The King's cold look, the nobles' ſcorn,
And laſt, and worſt to ſpirit proud,
Had borne the pity of the crowd ;
But Lufra had been fondly bred,
To ſhare his board, to watch his bed,
And oft would Ellen, Lufra's neck,
In maiden glee, with garlands deck ;
They were ſuch playmates, that with name
Of Lufra, Ellen's image came.
His ſtifled wrath is brimming high,
In darkened brow and flaſhing eye ;
As waves before the bark divide,
The crowd gave way before his ſtride ;
Needs but a buffet and no more,
The groom lies ſenſeleſs in his gore.
Such blow no other hand could deal,
Though gauntleted in glove of ſteel.

XXVI.

Then clamoured loud the royal train,
And brandiſhed ſwords and ſtaves amain.
But ſtern the Baron's warning—" Back !
Back on your lives, ye menial pack !
Beware the Douglas. Yes ! behold,
King James, the Douglas, doomed of old,

And vainly ſought for near and far,
A victim to atone the war,
A willing victim now attends,
Nor craves thy grace but for his friends."
"Thus is my clemency repaid?
Preſumptuous Lord!" the monarch ſaid;
"Of thy mis-proud ambitious clan,
Thou, James of Bothwell, wert the man,
The only man, in whom a foe
My woman-mercy would not know:
But ſhall a Monarch's preſence brook
Injurious blow, and haughty look?
What ho! the Captain of our Guard!
Give the offender fitting ward.
Break off the ſports!"—for tumult roſe,
And yeomen 'gan to bend their bows—
"Break off the ſports!" he ſaid, and frowned,
"And bid our horſemen clear the ground."

XXVII.

Then uproar wild and miſarray
Marr'd the fair form of feſtal day.
The horſemen pricked among the crowd,
Repelled by threats and inſult loud;
To earth are borne the old and weak,
The timorous fly, the women ſhriek;

With flint, with ſhaft, with ſtaff, with bar,
The hardier urge tumultuous war.
At once round Douglas darkly ſweep
The royal ſpears in circle deep,
And ſlowly ſcale the pathway ſteep ;
While on the rear in thunder pour
The rabble with diſordered roar.
With grief the noble Douglas ſaw
The commons riſe againſt the law,
And to the leading ſoldier ſaid,
"Sir John of Hyndford ! 'twas my blade
That knighthood on thy ſhoulder laid ;
For that good deed permit me then
A word with theſe miſguided men.

XXVIII.

"Hear, gentle friends ! ere yet, for me,
Ye break the bands of fealty.
My life, my honour, and my cauſe,
I tender free to Scotland's laws.
Are theſe ſo weak as muſt require
The aid of your miſguided ire ?
Or, if I ſuffer cauſeleſs wrong,
Is then my ſelfiſh rage ſo ſtrong,
My ſenſe of public weal ſo low,
That, for mean vengeance on a foe,

Thoſe cords of love I ſhould unbind,
Which knit my country and my kind ?
Oh no ! Believe, in yonder tower
It will not ſoothe my captive hour,
To know thoſe ſpears our foes ſhould dread,
For me in kindred gore are red ;
To know, in fruitleſs brawl begun,
For me, that mother wails her ſon ;
For me, that widow's mate expires ;
For me, that orphans weep their ſires ;
That patriots mourn inſulted laws,
And curſe the Douglas for the cauſe.
Oh let your patience ward ſuch ill,
And keep your right to love me ſtill !"

XXIX.

The crowd's wild fury ſunk again
In tears, as tempeſts melt in rain.
With liſted hands and eyes, they prayed
For bleſſings on his generous head,
Who for his country felt alone,
And prized her blood beyond his own.
Old men, upon the verge of life,
Bleſſed him who ſtayed the civil ſtrife ;
And mothers held their babes on high,
The ſelf-devoted chief to ſpy,

Triumphant over wrong and ire,
To whom the prattlers owed a ſire :
Even the rough ſoldier's heart was moved ;
As if behind ſome bier beloved,
With trailing arms and drooping head,
The Douglas up the hill he led,
And at the caſtle's battled verge,
With ſighs, reſigned his honoured charge.

XXX.

The offended Monarch rode apart,
With bitter thought and ſwelling heart,
And would not now vouchſafe again
Through Stirling ſtreets to lead his train.
"Oh Lennox, who would wiſh to rule
This changeling crowd, this common fool !
Hear'ſt thou," he ſaid, "the loud acclaim
With which they ſhout the Douglas name ?
With like acclaim, the vulgar throat
Strained for King James their morning note ;
With like acclaim they hailed the day
When firſt I broke the Douglas' ſway ;
And like acclaim would Douglas greet,
If he could hurl me from my ſeat.
Who o'er the herd would wiſh to reign,
Fantaſtic, fickle, fierce, and vain ?

Vain as the leaf upon the ſtream,
And fickle as a changeful dream ;
Fantaſtic as a woman's mood,
And fierce as Frenzy's fevered blood.
Thou many-headed monſter-thing,
Oh who would wiſh to be thy king !

XXXI.

"But ſoft ! what meſſenger of ſpeed
Spurs hitherward his panting ſteed ?
I gueſs his cognizance afar—
What from our couſin, John of Mar ?"
"He prays, my liege, your ſports keep bound
Within the ſafe and guarded ground :
For ſome foul purpoſe yet unknown—
Moſt ſure for evil to the throne—
The outlawed Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
Has ſummoned his rebellious crew ;
'Tis ſaid, in James of Bothwell's aid
Theſe looſe banditti ſtand arrayed.
The Earl of Mar, this morn, from Doune,
To break their muſter marched, and ſoon
Your grace will hear of battle fought ;
But earneſtly the Earl beſought,
Till for ſuch danger he provide,
With ſcanty train you will not ride."

XXXII.

"Thou warn'ſt me I have done amiſs,
I ſhould have earlier looked to this :
I loſt it in this buſtling day.
Retrace with ſpeed thy former way ;
Spare not for ſpoiling of thy ſteed,
The beſt of mine ſhall be thy meed.
Say to our faithful Lord of Mar,
We do forbid the intended war ;
Roderick, this morn, in ſingle fight,
Was made our priſoner by a knight,
And Douglas hath himſelf and cauſe
Submitted to our kingdom's laws.
The tidings of their leaders loſt
Will ſoon diſſolve the mountain hoſt,
Nor would we that the vulgar feel,
For their Chief's crimes, avenging ſteel.
Bear Mar our meſſage, Braco, fly."
He turned his ſteed—"My liege, I hie ;
Yet, ere I croſs this lily lawn,
I fear the broad-ſwords will be drawn."
The turf the flying courſer ſpurned,
And to his towers the King returned.

XXXIII.

Ill with King James's mood that day
Suited gay feaſt and minſtrel lay ;
Soon were diſmiſſed the courtly throng,
And ſoon cut ſhort the feſtal ſong.
Nor leſs upon the ſaddened town
The evening ſunk in ſorrow down ;
The burghers ſpoke of civil jar,
Of rumoured feuds and mountain war,
Of Moray, Mar, and Roderick Dhu,
All up in arms : the Douglas too,
They mourned him pent within the hold
"Where ſtout Earl William was of old ;"
And there his word the ſpeaker ſtaid,
And finger on his lip he laid,
Or pointed to his dagger blade.
But jaded horſemen from the weſt,
At evening to the caſtle preſſed :
And buſy talkers ſaid they bore
Tidings of fight on Katrine's ſhore ;
At noon the deadly fray begun,
And laſted till the ſet of ſun.
Thus giddy rumour ſhook the town,
Till cloſed the night her pennons brown.

Canto Sixth.—The Guard Room.

I.

HE ſun, awakening, through the ſmoky air
Of the dark city caſts a ſullen glance,
Rouſing each caitiff to his taſk of care,
Of ſinful man the ſad inheritance ;
Summoning revellers from the lagging dance,
Scaring the prowling robber to his den ;
Gilding on battled tower the warder's lance,
And warning ſtudent pale to leave his pen,
And yield his drowſy eyes to the kind nurſe of men.

What various ſcenes, and oh ! what ſcenes of woe,
Are witneſſed by that red and ſtruggling beam !
The fevered patient, from his pallet low,
Through crowded hoſpital beholds its ſtream ;
The ruined maiden trembles at its gleam,

The debtor wakes to thought of gyve and jail,
The love-lorn wretch ſtarts from tormenting dream ;
The wakeful mother, by the glimmering pale,
Trims her ſick infant's couch, and ſoothes his feeble wail.

II.

At dawn the towers of Stirling rang
With ſoldier-ſtep and weapon clang,
While drums, with rolling note, foretell
Relief to weary ſentinel.
Through narrow loop and caſement barr'd,
The ſunbeams ſought the Court of Guard,
And, ſtruggling with the ſmoky air,
Deadened the torches' yellow glare.
In comfortleſs alliance ſhone
The lights through arch of blackened ſtone,
And ſhowed wild ſhapes in garb of war,
Faces deformed with beard and ſcar,
All haggard from the midnight watch,
And fevered with the ſtern debauch ;
For the oak table's maſſive board,
Flooded with wine, with fragments ſtored,
And beakers drained, and cups o'erthrown,
Showed in what ſport the night had flown.
Some, weary, ſnored on floor and bench ;
Some laboured ſtill their thirſt to quench ;

Some, chilled with watching, ſpread their hands
O'er the huge chimney's dying brands ;
While round them, or beſide them flung,
At every ſtep their harneſs rung.

III.

Theſe drew not for their fields the ſword,
Like tenants of a feudal lord,
Nor owned the patriarchal claim
Of chieftain in their leader's name ;
Adventurers they, from far who roved,
To live by battle which they loved.
There the Italian's clouded face,
The ſwarthy Spaniard's there you trace ;
The mountain-loving Switzer there
More freely breathed in mountain-air ;
The Fleming there deſpiſed the ſoil,
That paid ſo ill the labourer's toil ;
Their rolls ſhowed French and German name ;
And merry England's exiles came,
To ſhare, with ill-concealed diſdain,
Of Scotland's pay the ſcanty gain.
All brave in arms, well trained to wield
The heavy halbert, brand, and ſhield ;
In camps licentious, wild, and bold ;
In pillage, fierce and uncontrolled ;

And now, by holytide and feaſt,
From rules of diſcipline releaſed.

IV.

They held debate of bloody fray,
Fought 'twixt Loch-Katrine and Achray.
Fierce was their ſpeech, and, mid their words,
Their hands oft grappled to their ſwords ;
Nor ſunk their tone to ſpare the ear
Of wounded comrades groaning near,
Whoſe mangled limbs, and bodies gored,
Bore token of the mountain ſword,
Though, neighbouring to the Court of Guard,
Their prayers and feveriſh wails were heard ;—
Sad burden to the ruffian joke,
And ſavage oath by fury ſpoke !—
At length upſtarted John of Brent,
A yeoman from the banks of Trent ;
A ſtranger to reſpect or fear,
In peace a chaſer of the deer,
In hoſt a hardy mutineer,
But ſtill the boldeſt of the crew,
When deed of danger was to do.
He grieved, that day their games cut ſhort,
And marr'd the dicers' brawling ſport,

And ſhouted loud, "Renew the bowl!
And, while a merry catch I troll,
Let each the buxom chorus bear,
Like brethren of the brand and ſpear."

V.

Soldier's Song.

Our vicar ſtill preaches that Peter and Poule
Laid a ſwinging long curſe on the bonny brown bowl,
That there's wrath and deſpair in the jolly black jack,
And the ſeven deadly ſins in a flagon of ſack;
Yet, whoop, Barnaby! off with thy liquor,
Drink upſees out, and a fig for the vicar!

Our vicar he calls it damnation to ſip
The ripe ruddy dew of a woman's dear lip,
Says, that Beelzebub lurks in her kerchief ſo ſly,
And Apollyon ſhoots darts from her merry black eye;
Yet whoop, Jack; kiſs Gillian the quicker,
Till ſhe bloom like a roſe, and a fig for the vicar!

Our vicar thus preaches—and why ſhould he not?
For the dues of his cure are the placket and pot;
And 'tis right of his office poor laymen to lurch,
Who infringe the domains of our good mother Church.
Yet whoop, bully-boys! off with your liquor,
Sweet Marjorie's the word, and a fig for the vicar!

VI.

The warder's challenge heard without,
Stayed in mid roar the merry ſhout.

A ſoldier to the portal went—
"Here is old Bertram, ſirs, of Ghent;
And, beat for jubilee the drum!
A maid and minſtrel with him come."
Bertram, a Fleming, grey and ſcarr'd,
Was entering now the Court of Guard,
A harper with him, and, in plaid,
All muffled cloſe, a mountain maid,
Who backward ſhrunk to 'ſcape the view
Of the looſe ſcene and boiſterous crew.
"What news?" they roared:—"I only know,
From noon till eve we fought with foe,
As wild and as untameable
As the rude mountains where they dwell.
On both ſides ſtore of blood is loſt,
Nor much ſucceſs can either boaſt."
"But whence thy captives, friend? ſuch ſpoil
As theirs muſt needs reward thy toil.
Old doſt thou wax, and wars grow ſharp;
Thou now haſt glee-maiden and harp,
Get thee an ape, and trudge the land,
The leader of a juggler band."

VII.

"No, comrade;—no ſuch fortune mine.
After the fight, theſe ſought our line,

That aged harper and the girl,
And, having audience of the Earl,
Mar bade I ſhould purvey them ſteed,
And bring them hitherward with ſpeed.
Forbear your mirth and rude alarm,
For none ſhall do them ſhame or harm."
"Hear ye his boaſt!" cried John of Brent,
Ever to ſtrife and jangling bent,
"Shall he ſtrike doe beſide our lodge,
And yet the jealous niggard grudge
To pay the foreſter his fee?
I'll have my ſhare howe'er it be,
Deſpite of Moray, Mar, or thee."
Bertram his forward ſtep withſtood;
And burning in his vengeful mood,
Old Allan, though unfit for ſtrife,
Laid hand upon his dagger knife;
But Ellen boldly ſtepp'd between,
And dropp'd at once the tartan ſcreen;
So, from his morning cloud, appears
The ſun of May, through ſummer tears.
The ſavage ſoldiery, amazed,
As on deſcended angel gazed;
Even hardy Brent, abaſhed and tamed,
Stood half admiring, half aſhamed.

VIII.

Boldly ſhe ſpoke—"Soldiers, attend!
My father was the ſoldier's friend;
Cheered him in camps, in marches led,
And with him in the battle bled.
Not from the valiant, or the ſtrong,
Should exile's daughter ſuffer wrong."
Anſwered De Brent, moſt forward ſtill
In every feat or good or ill,
"I ſhame me of the part I played;
And thou an outlaw's child, poor maid!
An outlaw I by Foreſt laws,
And merry Needwood knows the cauſe.
Poor Roſe—if Roſe be living now"—
He wiped his iron eye and brow,
"Muſt bear ſuch age, I think as thou.
Hear ye, my mates; I go to call
The Captain of our watch to hall:
There lies my halbert on the floor;
And he that ſteps my halbert o'er,
To do the maid injurious part,
My ſhaft ſhall quiver in his heart!
Beware looſe ſpeech, or jeſting rough:
Ye all know John de Brent. Enough."

IX.

Their Captain came, a gallant young—
(Of Tullibardine's houſe he ſprung):
Nor wore he yet the ſpurs of knight,
Gay was his mien, his humour light,
And, though by courteſy controlled,
Forward his ſpeech, his bearing bold.
The highborn maiden ill could brook
The ſcanning of his curious look
And dauntleſs eye; and yet, in ſooth,
Young Lewis was a generous youth;
But Ellen's lovely face and mien,
Ill-ſuited to the garb and ſcene,
Might lightly bear conſtruction ſtrange,
And give looſe fancy ſcope to range.
"Welcome to Stirling towers, fair maid!
Come ye to ſeek a champion's aid,
On palfrey white, with harper hoar,
Like errant damoſel of yore?
Does thy high queſt a knight require,
Or may the venture ſuit a ſquire?"
Her dark eye flaſhed; ſhe pauſed and ſighed,
"Oh what have I to do with pride!—
Through ſcenes of ſorrow, ſhame, and ſtrife,
A ſuppliant for a father's life,

I crave an audience of the King.
Behold, to back my ſuit, a ring,
The royal pledge of grateful claims,
Given by the Monarch to Fitz-James."

X.

The ſignet ring young Lewis took,
With deep reſpect and altered look;
And ſaid—"This ring our duties own;
And pardon, if, to worth unknown,
In ſemblance mean obſcurely veiled,
Lady, in aught my folly failed.
Soon as the day flings wide his gates,
The King ſhall know what ſuitor waits.
Pleaſe you, meanwhile, in fitting bower,
Repoſe you till his waking hour;
Female attendance ſhall obey
Your heſt, for ſervice or array.
Permit I marſhal you the way."
But, ere ſhe followed, with the grace
And open bounty of her race,
She bade her ſlender purſe be ſhared
Among the ſoldiers of the guard.
The reſt with thanks their guerdon took;
But Brent, with ſhy and awkward look,

On the reluctant maiden's hold
Forced bluntly back the proffered gold;—
"Forgive a haughty Engliſh heart,
And oh, forget its ruder part!
The vacant purſe ſhall be my ſhare,
Which in my barret-cap I'll bear,
Perchance, in jeopardy of war,
Where gayer creſts may keep afar."
With thanks—'twas all ſhe could—the maid
His rugged courteſy repaid.

XI.

When Ellen forth with Lewis went,
Allan made ſuit to John of Brent:—
"My lady ſafe, oh let your grace
Give me to ſee my maſter's face!
His minſtrel I—to ſhare his doom
Bound from the cradle to the tomb.
Tenth in deſcent, ſince firſt my ſires
Waked for his noble houſe their lyres,
Nor one of all the race was known
But prized its weal above their own.
With the Chief's birth begins our care;
Our harp muſt ſoothe the infant heir,
Teach the youth tales of fight, and grace
His earlieſt feat of field or chaſe:

In peace, in war, our rank we keep,
We cheer his board, we ſoothe his ſleep,
Nor leave him till we pour our verſe,
A doleful tribute ! o'er his hearſe.
Then let me ſhare his captive lot ;
It is my right—deny it not ! "
"Little we reck," ſaid John of Brent,
"We ſouthern men, of long deſcent ;
Nor wot we how a name—a word—
Makes clanſmen vaſſals to a lord :
Yet kind my noble landlord's part—
God bleſs the houſe of Beaudeſert !
And, but I loved to drive the deer,
More than to guide the labouring ſteer,
I had not dwelt an outcaſt here,
Come, good old Minſtrel, follow me ;
Thy Lord and Chieftain ſhalt thou ſee."

XII.

Then, from a ruſted iron hook,
A bunch of ponderous keys he took,
Lighted a torch, and Allan led
Through grated arch and paſſage dread.
Portals they paſſed, where, deep within,
Spoke priſoner's moan and fetters' din ;

Through rugged vaults, where, loofely ftored,
Lay wheel, and axe, and headfman's fword,
And many an hideous engine grim,
For wrenching joint, and crufhing limb,
By artifts formed, who deemed it fhame
And fin to give their work a name.
They halted at a low-browed porch,
And Brent to Allan gave the torch,
While bolt and chain he backward rolled,
And made the bar unhafp its hold.
They entered—'twas a prifon-room
Of ftern fecurity and gloom,
Yet not a dungeon; for the day
Through lofty gratings found its way,
And rude and antique garniture
Decked the fad walls and oaken floor;
Such as the rugged days of old,
Deem'd fit for captive noble's hold.
"Here," faid De Brent, "Thou may'ft remain,
Till the Leech vifit him again.
Strict is his charge, the warders tell,
To tend the noble prifoner well."
Retiring then, the bolt he drew,
And the lock's murmurs growl'd anew.
Roufed at the found, from lowly bed
A captive feebly raifed his head;

The wondering Minſtrel looked, and knew
Not his dear lord, but Roderick Dhu!
For, come from where Clan-Alpine fought,
They, erring, deemed the Chief he ſought.

XIII.

As the tall ſhip, whoſe lofty prore
Shall never ſtem the billows more,
Deſerted by her gallant band,
Amid the breakers lies aſtrand,—
So, on his couch, lay Roderick Dhu!
And oft his fevered limbs he threw
In toſs abrupt, as when her ſides
Lie rocking in the advancing tides,
That ſhake her frame with ceaſeleſs beat,
Yet cannot heave her from her ſeat;
Oh! how unlike her courſe on ſea!
Or his free ſtep on hill and lea!—
Soon as the Minſtrel he could ſcan,
"What of thy lady?—of my clan?—
My mother?—Douglas?—tell me all!
Have they been ruined in my fall?
Ah, yes! or wherefore art thou here!
Yet ſpeak—ſpeak boldly!—do not fear."
(For Allan, who his mood well knew,
Was choked with grief and terror too.)

"Who fought—who fled? Old man, be brief;
Some might—for they had loſt their Chief.
Who baſely live?—who bravely died?"
"Oh, calm thee, Chief!" the Minſtrel cried,
"Ellen is ſafe;"—"For that, thank Heaven!"
"And hopes are for the Douglas given;
The Lady Margaret too is well,
And, for thy clan—on field or fell,
Has never harp of minſtrel told,
Of combat fought ſo true and bold.
Thy ſtately pine is yet unbent,
Though many a goodly bough is rent."

XIV.

The Chieftain reared his form on high,
And fever's fire was in his eye;
But ghaſtly, pale, and livid ſtreaks
Chequered his ſwarthy brow and cheeks.
—"Hark, Minſtrel! I have heard thee play,
With meaſure bold on feſtal day,
In yon lone iſle . . . again where ne'er
Shall harper play, or warrior hear . . .
That ſtirring air that peals on high,
O'er Dermid's race our victory.
Strike it!—and then (for well thou canſt)
Free from thy minſtrel-ſpirit glanced,

Fling me the picture of the fight,
When met my clan the Saxon might.
I'll liſten, till my fancy hears
The clang of ſwords, the craſh of ſpears!
Theſe grates, theſe walls, ſhall vaniſh then,
For the fair field of fighting men,
And my free ſpirit burſt away,
As if it ſoared from battle fray."
The trembling bard with awe obeyed—
Slow on the harp his hand he laid;
But ſoon remembrance of the ſight
He witneſſed from the mountain's height,
With what old Bertram told at night,
Awakened the full power of ſong,
And bore him in career along;—
As ſhallop launched on river's tide,
That ſlow and fearful leaves the ſide,
But, when it feels the middle ſtream,
Drives downward ſwift as lightning's beam.

XV.

Battle of Beal' an Duine.

"The Minſtrel came once more to view
The eaſtern ridge of Ben-venue,
For, ere he parted, he would ſay
Farewell to lovely Loch-Achray—

LOCH ACHRAY AND BENVENUE.

p. 194.

Where ſhall he find, in foreign land,
So lone a lake, ſo ſweet a ſtrand!—
There is no breeze upon the fern,
No ripple on the lake,
Upon her eyrie nods the erne,
The deer has ſought the brake;
The ſmall birds will not ſing aloud,
The ſpringing trout lies ſtill,
So darkly glooms yon thunder cloud,
That ſwathes, as with a purple ſhroud,
Benledi's diſtant hill.
Is it the thunder's ſolemn ſound
That mutters deep and dread,
Or echoes from the groaning ground
The warrior's meaſured tread?
Is it the lightning's quivering glance
That on the thicket ſtreams,
Or do they flaſh on ſpear and lance
The ſun's retiring beams?
—I ſee the dagger-creſt of Mar,
I ſee the Moray's ſilver ſtar,
Wave o'er the cloud of Saxon war,
That up the lake comes winding far!
To hero bound for battle-ſtrife,
Or bard of martial lay,
'Twere worth ten years of peaceful life,
One glance at their array!

XVI.

"Their light-armed archers far and near
  Surveyed the tangled ground;
Their centre ranks, with pike and ſpear,
  A twilight foreſt frowned;
Their barbed horſemen, in the rear,
  The ſtern battalia crowned.
No cymbal claſhed, no clarion rang,
  Still were the pipe and drum;
Save heavy tread, and armour's clang,
  The ſullen march was dumb.
There breathed no wind their creſts to ſhake,
  Or wave their flags abroad;
Scarce the frail aſpen ſeem to quake,
  That ſhadowed o'er their road.
Their vanward ſcouts no tidings bring,
  Can rouſe no lurking foe,
Nor ſpy a trace of living thing,
  Save when they ſtirred the roe;
The hoſt moves like a deep-ſea wave,
Where riſe no rocks its pride to brave,
  High-ſwelling, dark, and ſlow.
The lake is paſſed, and now they gain
A narrow and a broken plain,
Before the Troſachs' rugged jaws;
And here the horſe and ſpearmen pauſed,

While, to explore the dangerous glen,
Dive through the paſs the archer-men.

XVII.

"At once there roſe ſo wild a yell
Within that dark and narrow dell,
As all the fiends, from heaven that fell,
Had pealed the banner-cry of hell!
Forth from the paſs in tumult driven,
Like chaff before the wind of heaven,
The archery appear:
For life! for life! their flight they ply—
And ſhriek, and ſhout, and battle-cry,
And plaids and bonnets waving high,
And broad-ſwords flaſhing to the ſky,
Are maddening in the rear.
Onward they drive, in dreadful race,
Purſuers and purſued;
Before that tide of flight and chaſe,
How ſhall it keep its rooted place,
The ſpearmen's twilight wood?
—'Down, down,' cried Mar, 'your lances down!
Bear back both friend and foe!'
Like reeds before the tempeſt's frown,
That ſerried grove of lances brown
At once lay levell'd low;

And clofely ſhouldering ſide to ſide,
The briſtling ranks the onſet bide.
—'We'll quell the ſavage mountaineer,
As their Tinchel cows the game!
They come as fleet as foreſt deer,
We'll drive them back as tame.'

XVIII.

"Bearing before them, in their courſe,
The relics of the archer force,
Like wave with creſt of ſparkling foam,
Right onward did Clan-Alpine come.
Above the tide, each broad-ſword bright
Was brandiſhing like beam of light,
Each targe was dark below;
And with the ocean's mighty ſwing,
When heaving to the tempeſt's wing,
They hurled them on the foe.
I heard the lance's ſhivering craſh,
As when the whirlwind rends the aſh;
I heard the broad-ſword's deadly clang,
As if an hundred anvils rang!
But Moray wheeled his rearward rank
Of horſemen on Clan-Alpine's flank—
'My banner-man, advance!
I ſee,' he cried, 'their column ſhake.

Now, gallants! for your ladies' ſake,
Upon them with the lance!'
The horſemen daſhed among the rout,
As deer break through the broom;
Their ſteeds are ſtout, their ſwords are out,
They ſoon make lightſome room.
Clan-Alpine's beſt are backward borne—
Where, where was Roderick then!
One blaſt upon his bugle-horn
Were worth a thouſand men.
And refluent through the paſs of fear
The battle's tide was pour'd;
Vaniſhed the Saxon's ſtruggling ſpear,
Vaniſhed the mountain ſword.
As Bracklinn's chaſm, ſo black and ſteep,
Receives her roaring linn,
As the dark caverns of the deep
Suck the wild whirlpool in,
So did the deep and darkſome paſs
Devour the battle's mingled maſs;
None linger now upon the plain,
Save thoſe who ne'er ſhall fight again.

XIX.

"Now weſtward rolls the battle's din,
That deep and doubling paſs within.

Minſtrel, away! the work of fate
Is bearing on: its iſſue wait,
Where the rude Troſachs' dread defile
Opens on Katrine's lake and iſle.
Grey Ben-venue I ſoon repaſſed,
Loch-Katrine lay beneath me caſt.
  The ſun is ſet—the clouds are met—
    The lowering ſcowl of heaven
  An inky hue of livid blue
    To the deep lake has given;
Strange guſts of wind from mountain glen
Swept o'er the lake, then ſunk agen.
I heeded not the eddying ſurge,
Mine eye but ſaw the Troſachs' gorge,
Mine ear but heard that ſullen ſound,
Which like an earthquake ſhook the ground,
And ſpoke the ſtern and deſperate ſtrife
That parts not but with parting life,
Seeming, to minſtrel-ear, to toll
The dirge of many a paſſing ſoul.
  Nearer it comes—the dim-wood glen
  The martial flood diſgorged agen,
    But not in mingled tide;
The plaided warriors of the North,
High on the mountain thunder forth,
    And overhang its ſide;

BENVENUE AND LOCH KATRINE.

p. 200.

While by the lake below appears
The darkening cloud of Saxon ſpears.
At weary bay each ſhattered band,
Eyeing their foemen, ſternly ſtand;
Their banners ſtream like tatter'd ſail,
That flings its fragments to the gale,
And broken arms and diſarray
Marked the fell havoc of the day.

XX.

"Viewing the mountain's ridge aſkance,
The Saxons ſtood in ſullen trance,
Till Moray pointed with his lance,
And cried—'Behold yon iſle!
See! none are left to guard its ſtrand,
But women weak, that wring the hand:
'Tis there of yore the robber band
Their booty wont to pile;—
My purſe, with bonnet-pieces ſtore,
To him will ſwim a bow-ſhot o'er,
And looſe a ſhallop from the ſhore.
Lightly we'll tame the war-wolf then,
Lords of his mate, and brood, and den.'
Forth from the ranks a ſpearman ſprung,
On earth his caſque and corſlet rung,
He plunged him in the wave:—

All ſaw the deed—the purpoſe knew,
And to their clamours Ben-venue
  A mingled echo gave;
The Saxons ſhout, their mate to cheer,
The helpleſs females ſcream for fear,
And yells for rage the mountaineer.
'Twas then, as by the outcry riven,
Poured down at once the lowering heaven;
A whirlwind ſwept Loch Katrine's breaſt,
Her billows reared their ſnowy creſt.
Well for the ſwimmer ſwelled they high,
To mar the Highland markſman's eye;
For round him ſhowered, 'mid rain and hail,
The vengeful arrows of the Gael.
In vain. He nears the iſle—and lo!
His hand is on a ſhallop's bow.
—Juſt then a flaſh of lightning came,
It tinged the waves and ſtrand with flame;
I marked Duncraggan's widowed dame,
Behind an oak I ſaw her ſtand,
A naked dirk gleamed in her hand:—
It darkened—but amid the moan
Of waves I heard a dying groan;—
Another flaſh! the ſpearman floats
A weltering corſe beſide the boats,
And the ſtern Matron o'er him ſtood,
Her hand and dagger ſtreaming blood.

XXI.

"'Revenge! revenge!' the Saxons cried,
The Gaels' exulting ſhout replied.
Deſpite the elemental rage,
Again they hurried to engage;
But, ere they cloſed in deſperate fight,
Bloody with ſpurring came a knight,
Sprang from his horſe, and, from a crag,
Waved 'twixt the hoſts a milk-white flag.
Clarion and trumpet by his ſide
Rang forth a truce-note high and wide,
While, in the monarch's name, afar
A herald's voice forbade the war,
For Bothwell's lord, and Roderick bold,
Were both, he ſaid, in captive hold."

—But here the lay made ſudden ſtand,
The harp eſcap'd the minſtrel's hand!
Oft had he ſtolen a glance, to ſpy
How Roderick brooked his minſtrelſy:
At firſt, the Chieftain, to the chime,
With lifted hand, kept feeble time;
That motion ceaſed—yet feeling ſtrong
Varied his look as changed the ſong;
At length, no more his deafened ear
The minſtrel melody can hear;

His face grows ſharp—his hands are clenched,
As if ſome pang his heart-ſtrings wrenched ;
Set are his teeth, his fading eye
Is ſternly fixed on vacancy.
Thus, motionleſs, and moanleſs, drew
His parting breath, ſtout Roderick Dhu !—
Old Allan-Bane looked on aghaſt,
While grim and ſtill his ſpirit paſſed ;
But when he ſaw that life was fled,
He poured his wailing o'er the dead.

XXII.

Lament.

"And art thou cold, and lowly laid,
Thy foeman's dread, thy people's aid,
Breadalbane's boaſt, Clan-Alpine's ſhade !
For thee ſhall none a requiem ſay ?
—For thee, who loved the minſtrel's lay,
For thee, of Bothwell's houſe the ſtay,
The ſhelter of her exiled line,
E'en in this priſon-houſe of thine,
I'll wail for Alpine's honoured pine !

"What groans ſhall yonder valleys fill !
What ſhrieks of grief ſhall rend yon hill !
What tears of burning rage ſhall thrill,
When mourns thy tribe thy battles done,
Thy fall before the race was won,
Thy ſword ungirt ere ſet of ſun !

There breathes not clanſman of thy line,
But would have given his life for thine.
Oh woe for Alpine's honoured pine !

"Sad was thy lot on mortal ſtage !—
The captive thruſh may brook the cage,
The priſoned eagle dies for rage.
Brave ſpirit, do not ſcorn my ſtrain !
And, when its notes awake again,
Even ſhe, ſo long beloved in vain,
Shall with my harp her voice combine,
And mix her woe and tears with mine,
To wail Clan-Alpine's honoured pine."

XXIII.

Ellen, the while, with burſting heart,
Remained in lordly bower apart,
Where played, with many-coloured gleams,
Through ſtoried pane the riſing beams.
In vain on gilded roof they fall,
And lighten'd up a tapeſtried wall,
And for her uſe a menial train
A rich collation ſpread in vain.
The banquet proud, the chamber gay,
Scarce drew one curious glance aſtray ;
Or, if ſhe looked, 'twas but to ſay,
With better omen dawned the day
In that lone iſle, where waved on high
The dun deer's hide for canopy ;

Where oft her noble father ſhared
The ſimple meal her care prepared,
While Lufra, crouching by her ſide,
Her ſtation claimed with jealous pride,
And Douglas, bent on woodland game,
Spoke of the chaſe to Malcolm Græme,
Whoſe anſwer, oft at random made,
The wandering of his thoughts betrayed—
Thoſe who ſuch ſimple joys have known
Are taught to prize them when they're gone.
But ſudden, ſee, ſhe lifts her head!
The window ſeeks with cautious tread.
What diſtant muſic has the power
To win her in this woeful hour!
'Twas from a turret that o'erhung
Her latticed bower, the ſtrain was ſung.

XXIV.

Lay of the Imprisoned Huntsman.

"My hawk is tired of perch and hood,
My idle greyhound loathes his food,
My horſe is weary of his ſtall,
And I am ſick of captive thrall.
I wiſh I were as I have been,
Hunting the hart in foreſt green,
With bended bow and bloodhound free,
For that's the life is meet for me.

I hate to learn the ebb of time,
From yon dull ſteeple's drowſy chime,
Or mark it as the ſunbeams crawl,
Inch after inch, along the wall.
The lark was wont my matins ring,
The ſable rook my veſpers ſing;
Theſe towers, although a king's they be,
Have not a hall of joy for me.

No more at dawning morn I riſe,
And ſun myſelf in Ellen's eyes,
Drive the fleet deer the foreſt through,
And homeward wend with evening dew;
A blytheſome welcome blythely meet,
And lay my trophies at her feet,
While fled the eve on wing of glee—
That life is loſt to love and me!"

XXV.

The heart-ſick lay was hardly ſaid
The liſt'ner had not turned her head,
It trickled ſtill, the ſtarting tear,
When light a footſtep ſtruck her ear,
And Snowdoun's graceful Knight was near.
She turned the haſtier, leſt again
The priſoner ſhould renew his ſtrain.
"Oh welcome, brave Fitz-James!" ſhe ſaid;
"How may an almoſt orphan maid
Pay the deep debt." "Oh ſay not ſo!
To me no gratitude you owe.

Not mine, alas ! the boon to give,
And bid thy noble father live ;
I can but be thy guide, ſweet maid,
With Scotland's King thy ſuit to aid.
No tyrant he, though ire and pride
May lead his better mood aſide.
Come, Ellen, come !—'tis more than time ;
He holds his court at morning prime."
With beating heart, and boſom wrung,
As to a brother's arm ſhe clung.
Gently he dried the falling tear,
And gently whiſpered hope and cheer ;
Her faltering ſteps half led, half ſtaid,
Through gallery fair and high arcade,
Till, at his touch, its wings of pride
A portal arch unfolded wide.

XXVI.

Within 'twas brilliant all and light,
A thronging ſcene of figures bright ;
It glowed on Ellen's dazzled ſight,
As when the ſetting ſun has given
Ten thouſand hues to ſummer even,
And, from their tiſſue, fancy frames
Aërial knights and fairy dames.

Still by Fitz-James her footing ſtaid ;
A few faint ſteps ſhe forward made,
Then ſlow her drooping head ſhe raiſed,
And fearful round the preſence gazed ;
For him ſhe ſought, who owned this ſtate,
The dreaded prince whoſe will was fate !
She gazed on many a princely port,
Might well have ruled a royal court ;
On many a ſplendid garb ſhe gazed—
Then turned bewildered and amazed,
For all ſtood bare ; and, in the room,
Fitz-James alone wore cap and plume.
To him each lady's look was lent,
On him each courtier's eye was bent ;
Midſt furs, and ſilks, and jewels ſheen,
He ſtood, in ſimple Lincoln green,
The centre of the glittering ring—
And Snowdoun's Knight is Scotland's King !

XXVII.

As wreath of ſnow, on mountain breaſt,
Slides from the rock that gave it reſt,
Poor Ellen glided from her ſtay,
And at the Monarch's feet ſhe lay ;
No word her choking voice commands—
She ſhowed the ring—ſhe claſped her hands.

Oh ! not a moment could he brook,
The generous prince, that ſuppliant look !
Gently he raiſed her—and the while
Checked with a glance the circle's ſmile.
Graceful, but grave, her brow he kiſſed,
And bade her terrors be diſmiſſed—
"Yes, Fair ; the wandering poor Fitz-James
The fealty of Scotland claims.
To him thy woes, thy wiſhes, bring ;
He will redeem his ſignet ring.
Aſk nought for Douglas—yeſter even,
His prince and he have much forgiven :
Wrong hath he had from ſlanderous tongue,
I, from his rebel kinſmen, wrong.
We would not to the vulgar crowd
Yield what they craved with clamour loud ;
Calmly we heard and judged his cauſe,
Our council aided, and our laws.
I ſtanched thy father's death-feud ſtern,
With ſtout De Vaux and grey Glencairn ;
And Bothwell's Lord henceforth we own
The friend and bulwark of our Throne.
But, lovely infidel, how now ?
What clouds thy miſbelieving brow ?
Lord James of Douglas, lend thine aid ;
Thou muſt confirm this doubting maid."

XXVIII.

Then forth the noble Douglas ſprung,
And on his neck his daughter hung.
The Monarch drank, that happy hour,
The ſweeteſt, holieſt draught of power—
When it can ſay, with godlike voice,
Ariſe, ſad Virtue, and rejoice !
Yet would not James the general eye
On nature's raptures long ſhould pry ;
He ſtepp'd between—" Nay, Douglas, nay,
Steal not my proſelyte away !
The riddle 'tis my right to read,
That brought this happy chance to ſpeed,
Yes, Ellen, when diſguiſed I ſtray,
In life's more low but happier way,
'Tis under name which veils my power,
Nor falſely veils—for Stirling's tower
Of yore the name of Snowdoun claims,
And Normans call me James Fitz-James.
Thus watch I o'er inſulted laws,
Thus learn to right the injured cauſe."
Then in a tone apart, and low,
—" Ah, little trait'reſs ! none muſt know
What idle dream, what lighter thought,
What vanity full dearly bought,

Joined to thine eye's dark witchcraft, drew
My ſpell-bound ſteps to Ben-venue,
In dangerous hour, and all but gave
Thy Monarch's life to mountain glaive !"
Aloud he ſpoke—"Thou ſtill doſt hold
That little taliſman of gold,
Pledge of my faith, Fitz-James's ring—
What ſeeks fair Ellen of the King ?"

XXIX.

Full well the conſcious maiden gueſſed,
He probed the weakneſs of her breaſt ;
But, with that conſciouſneſs, there came
A lightening of her fears for Græme,
And more ſhe deemed the monarch's ire
Kindled 'gainſt him, who, for her ſire,
Rebellious broad-ſword boldly drew ;
And to her generous feeling true,
She claimed the grace of Roderick Dhu.
"Forbear thy ſuit :—the King of Kings
Alone can ſtay life's parting wings.
I know his heart, I know his hand,
Have ſhared his cheer, and proved his brand ;—
My faireſt earldom would I give
To bid Clan-Alpine's Chieftain live !

Haſt thou no other boon to crave ?—
No other captive friend to ſave ?"
Bluſhing, ſhe turned her from the King,
And to the Douglas gave the ring,
As if ſhe wiſhed her ſire to ſpeak
The ſuit that ſtained her glowing cheek.
"Nay, then, my pledge has loſt its force,
And ſtubborn juſtice holds her courſe.
Malcolm, come forth !"—And, at the word,
Down kneel'd the Græme to Scotland's Lord.
"For thee, raſh youth, no ſuppliant ſues,
From thee may Vengeance claim her dues,
Who, nurtured underneath our ſmile,
Haſt paid our care by treacherous wile,
And ſought amid thy faithful clan,
A refuge for an outlawed man,
Diſhonouring thus thy loyal name.
Fetters and warder for the Græme !"
His chain of gold the King unſtrung,
The links o'er Malcolm's neck he flung,
Then gently drew the glittering band,
And laid the claſp on Ellen's hand.

Harp of the North, farewell! The hills grow dark,
  On purple peaks a deeper ſhade deſcending;
In twilight copſe the glow-worm lights her ſpark,
  The deer, half ſeen, are to the covert wending.
  Reſume thy wizard elm! the fountain lending,
And the wild breeze, thy wilder minſtrelſy;
  Thy numbers ſweet with Nature's veſpers blending,
With diſtant echo from the fold and lea,
And herd-boy's evening pipe, and hum of houſing bee.

Yet, once again, farewell, thou Minſtrel Harp!
  Yet, once again, forgive my feeble ſway,
And little reck I of the cenſure ſharp
  May idly cavil at an idle lay.
  Much have I owed thy ſtrains on life's long way,
Through ſecret woes the world has never known,
  When on the weary night dawned wearier day,
And bitterer was the grief devoured alone.
That I o'erlived ſuch woes, Enchantreſs! is thine own.

Hark! as my lingering footſteps ſlow retire,
  Some Spirit of the Air has waked thy ſtring!
'Tis now a Seraph bold, with touch of fire,
  'Tis now the bruſh of Fairy's frolic wing.

Receding now, the dying numbers ring
Fainter and fainter down the rugged dell,
And now the mountain breezes ſcarcely bring
A wandering witch-note of the diſtant ſpell—
And now, 'tis ſilent all !—Enchantreſs, fare thee well !

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The Lady
of the Lake
The gallant horse exhausted fell
Then descend down a darksome glen
Beneath a cliff in the rugged dell
Stopped lost in thought & unknown ken